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RELATING THE MILITARY: A PUBLIC AFFAIRS PERSPECTIVE OF THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

Research Report

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by

CDR Alfred E. Becker, USN

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A PUBLIC AFFAIRS PERSPECTIVE
OF THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

Research Report

by

Commander Alfred E. Becker, US Navy
Senior Research Fellow

1983

National Defense University
Research Directorate
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Washington, DC 20319

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Relating the Military: A Public Affairs Perspective of the All-Volunteer Force

The author's research selectively traces the public affairs history of draft abolition beginning with the end of the Johnson administration in 1968, analyzes Nixon administration actions through US withdrawal from Vietnam, and evaluates military and other government public affairs activity, or lack of it, in support of all-volunteer force (AVF) recruiting and retention from 1973 into 1981.

The research parallels a four-step public relations process commonly accepted by public relations (PR) practitioners: (1) fact-finding and research; (2) information campaign planning and community relations; (3) implementation and communication; and (4) feedback and evaluation.

The research led to five conclusions: (1) the AVF decision was politically based and carried out as a Nixon campaign promise, not as a result of public opinion research or following informed and balanced public debate of the issues; (2) the AVF decision did not grow out of a careful reinterpretation of US national security policy; (3) the Gates Commission report gave few recommendations by which to conduct an effective public affairs campaign to develop active public support and

understanding among volunteer-age youth, presuming instead that the public was committed to volunteerism and would easily sustain voluntary enlistments to maintain an active force of 2.3 to 2.5 million; (4) the military services were poorly prepared to conduct recruiting advertising programs to attract enough volunteers in the first years of the AVF, spending a great deal of money without long-term public affairs planning by military managers or advertising agencies; and (5) the Defense Department failed to employ its own senior leaders, or to enlist the support of other government leaders, in articulating the value of the military service experience to the individual or to American society.

The author recommends that the current administration incorporate strong advocacy of the military service experience for all young Americans as a component of its current public communications campaign to maintain public support for increased defense spending and combat readiness. Such advocacy based upon the ideals of patriotism and commitment to society should be undertaken by all senior administration spokespersons, not just those in the Department of Defense, taking their cues from White House guidance. Coupled with a vigorous recruiting effort from each of the services, and executive and legislative resolve to restore and maintain military pay and benefits, such a total-concept public affairs program has a fair chance of successfully attracting enough qualified recruits and retaining experienced career military personnel in the 1980s without returning to a peacetime draft.

1. PAST IS PROLOGUE

Every President comes to live with history--to probe why and how events occurred as they did. His purpose is not to understand it for its own sake, but to turn it forward, as if it were a powerful lamp, searching in the darkness where the future lies.

Lyndon Baines Johnson

Too often defense scholars consider the evolution and enactment of policy as though it occurred in a vacuum, overlooking current events and public opinion which surround it. Amidst the urgency of daily events many policymakers exhibit the same myopia, a condition which the best public affairs officers in government have been trying to correct for years. Many public affairs people have found it easier to await the formulation of new policy by their bosses than to participate in its development from the outset of planning. So doing, they have denied to the planning process a vitally important input--public opinion reaction probable after enactment of policy, or pressure for new policy which ought to be enacted. Instead they have satisfied themselves that merely being sensitive to the stories and trends in the mass media will make them able to predict public opinion. As a result, they have a tendency to move from one story to the next, crisis-managing "bad news" and distributing "good news" in a usually futile effort to counteract unfavorable stories. When rare opportunities are taken to establish some historical perspective, this same ledger-balance mentality, one bad story followed hopefully by one good story, usually pervades their effort.

In fairness to military public affairs activity, however, it should be noted that the Congress severely restricts the services from conducting surveys to test public reaction to new policy, preserving for the political and private sectors such statistical attempts to interpret the mood of the country.¹ This relegates the research effort to little more than reading mass media reports, rather like studying tea leaves to guess the public mood on a given issue. The staff public affairs officer too often claims mystical insight into the complexities of public opinion formation on a given issue by virtue of his daily interaction with members of the mass media. In fact, reporters are themselves reacting to public opinion at least as often as their stories create it.

This public affairs practitioner, turned temporary scholar, hardly can resist the temptation to view with 20-20 hindsight the all-volunteer force decisionmaking process of the early 1970s as a how-not-to public relations case study. The urge to generate a long list of mistakes by officials--no preplanning, no opinion surveys to truly test for public support of an AVF, erroneous assumptions that draft abolition might assuage national guilt over our involvement in Vietnam, to name but a few--is virtually irrepressible. However, one cannot criticize past decisions until their historical setting is examined and one has "probed why and how events occurred as they did."

Decline in Public Approval of the Military

This chapter summarizes the events from 1968 to 1972, a period extending from the end of the Johnson administration, its demise being so much intertwined with the military, Vietnam, and public opinion about the war, to the final decision by the Nixon administration not to seek new draft legislation. Looking at past events from a military public affairs perspective is a requisite first step in determining whether the government public affairs community has anything new to add to the military recruiting and retention programs of the 1980s. --

On 31 March 1968, President Lyndon Johnson announced his decision neither to seek nor accept a nomination for a second term in the White House so he could free himself from campaigning to guide the immediate direction of US policy in Vietnam and avoid overtones of "divisive partisanship" accompanying an election campaign. Opposition to the draft continued to grow throughout the year, punctuated by frequent events dramatized by the news media. For example, pediatrician Benjamin Spock and three others were found guilty of conspiring to urge resistance to the Selective Service System. Nine Roman Catholics who had seized and burned draft cards in Catonsville, Maryland, were found guilty of destroying government property. The UN Secretary General sought an unconditional halt to bombing of North Vietnam, and the International Liaison Committee of the Stockholm Conference on Vietnam claimed that 600

organizations in 41 countries agreed with him. What former White House historian Theodore White later would call the "campus proletariat" began to question "the Establishment" which linked the Defense Department and college and university campuses through an umbilical cord of research funding. Inspired by the Students for a Democratic Society, Columbia University students seized five campus buildings in April to protest continued school ties with the Institute for Defense Analysis.

Military public affairs activity in 1968, when not focused on Vietnam, was highlighted by: continuing debate about, and the subsequent release of, the U.S.S. PUEBLO crew members from almost year-long North Korean imprisonment; the loss of 6,000 sheep to nerve gas during field trials at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah; and the crash of a bomb-laden B-52 off Greenland followed by the week-long search for and recovery of radioactive pieces. Public affairs humorists in the Pentagon joked ironically that each service had its turn with a major news disaster that year.

By far, the 1968 domestic event which most galvanized and polarized public opinion regarding the interwoven issues of war, peace, and the draft, was the dramatic television coverage of massive demonstrations by members of the temporary coalition of antiwar and peace movements in Chicago during the Democratic National Convention. The public watched in horror as agitators touched off a bloody confrontation by taunting

police, thereby capitalizing on the presence of network TV cameras outside the convention hall. Those not watching the live coverage were treated to week-long instant replays of the battle in a manner reminiscent of Vietnam battlefield eyewitness reports during firefights. It is safe to assume Richard Nixon's campaign strategists were watching TV monitors disgustedly as inside the hall a floor debate on the Vietnam issue ended in adoption of the more hawkish of two proposed Democratic platform planks. Hubert Humphrey would stick to the official party line until late in the presidential race.

In contrast, Richard Nixon came away from a rather peaceful Republican Convention calling for a quick end to the war, but adopting a noninterference rationale for refusing to give concrete proposals as to how to do it. Earlier in the campaign he had advocated increased defense spending, but no doubt changed his approach based upon perceptions of growing antiwar public opinion.

Ten days after his inauguration, President Nixon directed the Defense Department to develop a plan to end the military draft and create a volunteer force. Throughout the year the Administration announced troop withdrawals from Vietnam and reductions in the number of draftees who would be required in the next callup.

On the nation's campuses a growing coalition of students, faculty, and staff debated the merits and demerits of defense research, sought either the removal of ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) altogether, or at least of college credits for ROTC courses, and became increasingly hostile toward the military-industrial complex.²

Perhaps most significantly, 1969 showed the Pentagon that it was not immune from attack from any quarter, even the "old-boy network" in the Congress. Criticism, suspicion of motive, and watchdogging were becoming valuable to them as political currency to be spent in purchasing favorable publicity from a growing constituency opposed to wartime spending. A broad base of opposition to US defense policy, apart from the single interest anti-Vietnam War elements, was assumed to be a reality in political and mass media circles. Congressional attitudes changed accordingly and the members refused to pass military appropriations bills until severely questioned. Cost overruns on the C-5A, the F-111, the Cheyenne helicopter, purchases of such unsatisfactory weapons as the Sheridan battle tank, the Army's embarrassed admission of responsibility for the dead sheep at Dugway more than 18 months after the incident, and revelations from the U.S.S. PUEBLO Court of Inquiry that contingency plans to protect the ship were wholly inadequate--these were some of the front-page headlines eroding the foundation of public support for the military.

When the Navy's EC-121 surveillance aircraft and 31 crewmembers fell to North Korean attack while conducting a mission similar to the PUEBLO's, many in the Navy suffered their own private crisis of confidence. The EVANS-MELBOURNE collision, which killed 73 US Navymen when U.S.S. EVANS ran into HMAS MELBOURNE, exacerbated fears that even fate was working against public affairs efforts to bolster waning public confidence in the military.

Morale sagged even further under the burden of charges that civilians were massacred by US soldiers at My Lai. Military leaders gradually learned to fight three wars at one time: the war in Vietnam; the war of hostile public opinion about spending without victory; and the war for the wavering hearts and minds of a growing number of soldiers, sailors and airmen. This was a time full of nagging concern that we were losing all three.

By now, time-honored griping in the ranks had devolved into random dissension and even to organized internal opposition to military order and discipline, both in Vietnam and at home. A "reformation movement" by the American Serviceman's Union, legal attacks on the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the growth of underground GI newspapers advocating draft resistance and demonstrations, and reports of isolated rebellions and mutinies plagued the orderly military mind with anger, frustration, and embryonic doubts about its legitimacy in America.

Students won a moral victory when the National Commission on the causes and Prevention of Violence warned that US legislation proposed to punish students for campus disorders was likely to cause the conflict against authorities to spread. In frustration perhaps, Vice President Spiro Agnew told a Republican dinner audience in New Orleans that the Vietnam War moratorium conducted nationwide on 15 October 1969 was "encouraged by an effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectuals." News media picked up the phrase, and it became a battle cry used again by members of the American intelligentsia.

As the decade of the 60s drew to a close, other events hammered on public sentiment, trying to shape a consensus against continued fighting in Vietnam. Such events included the following:

- o President Nixon announced a reduction in the draft call by 50,000 for the last three months of the year;
- o Senator Goodell of New York proposed legislation, which did not pass, to require that all troops be withdrawn from Vietnam by the end of 1970;
- o The Senate passed a resolution restricting presidential war-making powers;
- o In November 250,000 antiwar protestors staged a peaceful march and rally in Washington, DC;
- o The US Army announced that First Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., had been charged with murder in connection with the My Lai massacre;
- o President Nixon announced the forthcoming orderly withdrawal of more troops from Vietnam on a secret schedule;

- o A lottery was conducted for the first time at Selective Service headquarters in December to determine for 1970 the order for draft selections;
- o The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence issued its final report calling for the diversion of at least \$20 billion a year from defense to domestic spending.

Historian Theodore White said undercurrents of mood and passion, and not grand events, gave 1970 its character. Campus demonstrations dominated much of the domestic news, ignited repeatedly by the deaths at Kent State University. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education announced the results of its survey that 57 percent of all the nation's colleges and universities endured organized dissent and 21 percent stopped normal academic activity altogether during the year.

President Nixon's report to the Congress presaged a change in US strategic posture from confrontation to negotiation, not trying to oppose communism at every opportunity. Thus the previous demand upon the military to be prepared to conduct three wars simultaneously--two major and one minor--was reduced to one major war, probably in Europe, and one minor war, thought to be most likely in Asia. Coincidentally, perhaps, the President's report on future US foreign policy and the Gates Commission report recommending draft abolition occurred within three days of one another.

The Gates Commission Report

The Gates report, named after former defense secretary Thomas Gates, issued 21 February 1970 in response to the President's 1969 request for an all-volunteer study, suggested a largely volunteer force of 2.5 million, requiring 250,000 true volunteers per year. Its probable political purpose was to quell the domestic furor over the armed forces expansion from 2.5 million in 1965 to 3.5 million in 1968 which had been accomplished largely by adding draftees. These conscripts also comprised about 30 percent of US personnel in Vietnam.

Military reaction to the Gates report was mixed. The services feared that instead of receiving demographically representative and well-qualified recruits, they might attract more blacks and the less well-educated, with a largely Southern officer corps. The Air Force and Navy feared the loss of many of their more qualified volunteers who were joining as the least objectionable service alternative when compared to the Army.

President Nixon accepted the commission's basic recommendations. However, he requested a two-year extension of the draft which otherwise would expire on 30 June 1971. As recommended by the Gates report, enlisted men with less than two years service received a pay and benefits raise as an initial enlistment incentive to ease the transition to an all-volunteer force.

In the same period, General Lewis B. Hershey was retired as director of the Selective Service System in reaction to charges that he was insensitive and unyielding to growing criticism that the draft was discriminatory. He had become a political liability the Nixon administration could not afford to keep.

Despite reservations, the services joined the administration's apparent determination to initiate a volunteer force program by attempting to eliminate outmoded disciplinary procedures and otherwise improve the quality of military life. Not the least of motivations was the growing public outcry of racial discrimination in the military. The Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, brought a new look to the most tradition-bound of the services. Starting early in his term of office, Zumwalt rapidly issued about 120 so-called "Z-Grams" announcing what were, to old-guard admirals, somewhat radical decrees abolishing what some called "chicken rags." Beer in the barracks, beards, and officer-like uniforms for enlisted personnel became the new order of the day. The Navy would never be quite the same. Some said it was for the better; others retired from active duty.

Another presidential, defense-oriented commission, the Fitzhugh Panel, also completed its work in 1970, recommending that the Pentagon be functionally divided into three parts: resource management, evaluation, and operations, each headed by a civilian deputy secretary. The Joint

Chiefs of Staff objected to that part of the panel's report, recommending instead direct control of the operating forces under a unified commander reporting directly to the deputy defense secretary in charge of operations, and reversion of the JCS to their role as service chiefs and principal military presidential advisers.

The support at all levels, and the floodtide of tax dollars and draftees into the war chest, were being replaced rapidly by a stingy and suspicious new nationwide awareness.

The Changing Political-Military Equation

The probable single most important event of 1971 affecting the issue of the draft goes unnoticed today and had little impact then upon planning for the future in the Pentagon, except perhaps in the voting assistance offices. That event was the ratification of the 26th Amendment to the Constitution giving the right to vote to Americans ages 18 to 21 years. In retrospect it was the event whose impact was perhaps the greatest imponderable but most thought about by politicians looking forward to the 1972 national elections.

In April 1971 public confidence in the Nixon administration had reached the lowest point of any previous administration since that of Harry Truman. The Nixon team had enjoyed its highest public opinion

ratings in late 1969 following the President's promise to turn the war over to the Vietnamese at long last. Yet the issue of the war would not go away as the five-month court-martial of Lieutenant Calley dragged before public scrutiny the atrocities committed by young American "boys next door." When William L. Calley was found guilty of the premeditated murder of 22 unarmed civilians, what might have been just another wartime episode for most Americans became instead a national sin for which every American had to hold himself responsible. The members of the military felt all that grief and more. An unbridgeable chasm now seemed to separate them from the public. American fighting spirit, like support for the Vietnam conflict, had died, and everyone wanted relief from the war, the draft, and the legions of demonstrators.

The administration's political strategists had more immediate concerns. Faced with the certainty that the Democratic opposition would seek issues to capture public enthusiasm and the new votes of 11 million youths, Republican analysts pondered the demographics of the 1970 census just coming available in the spring of 1971 in order to find the campaign theme which would give them an election victory in 1972.³

New voters, ages 18 to 21, accounted for 11 million; those from 21 to 24 years numbered another 14 million. These young voters were the bow wave of the post-war baby boom. They were more educated than any youth group in history as a result of the educational crusade of the 1960s.

More than half of those eligible for college were in attendance. These young Americans had grown up under the first-time influence of television, the pill, new sexual freedom, and a Bedouin-like geographic mobility such that students in some small college towns far outnumbered the local population. If they voted as a bloc, they could easily dislodge political grass~~roots~~ machinery which had been in place for generations, and they did.

In the midst of such uncertainties, adverse public opinion, failed domestic policies which could not create adequate jobs for youth, and the memory of the youth demonstrations which had punctuated the Democratic National Convention four years earlier, Nixon campaign strategists calculated that the theme most likely to capture the young vote was one which spoke to their concerns for the quality of the American way~~of~~ life in the immediate future. Better economic conditions, more employment, disengagement from the Vietnam war, and abolishment of the draft, coupled with a deemphasis of future military entanglements, were the planks upon which a Republican victory might be built.

Throughout 1971, the military dealt with public issues seemingly far removed from forthcoming election campaign strategy. In January, the US command in Vietnam announced the start of an anti-drug-abuse program. In that same month the President asked Congress for pay increases and other benefits for servicemen--another step toward creation of an all-volunteer

force. By March, the Calley court-martial had faded from the front pages. During April, Nixon promised the American public to withdraw another 100,000 troops by December, and he pledged continued use of US air power against North Vietnam so long as they kept our POWs.

On 23 April 1971, Vietnam veterans marched before the Capitol to toss their combat medals on its steps, climaxing week-long demonstrations in Washington. The next day, sympathetic mass rallies elsewhere also called for an immediate end to the war. Early in May when antiwar protestors tried unsuccessfully to shut down the Federal government in the Capital, a record 7,000 were arrested. A smaller counter-demonstration six days later in the city called for a Vietnam victory, giving one the sense of a growing division of spirit in the country.

The spring of 1971 marked the use of national commercial print media advertising by the antiwar movement. A group known as "Help Unsell the War" placed an ad in many publications repeating the theme of the Vietnam veterans' march on the Capitol. Shown was a close-up picture of the Purple Heart medal with the words "return to sender" emblazoned on the ribbon--depicting visually the sentiment expressed by demonstrating veterans who threw their medals on the Capitol steps. The copy read:

MEDALS FOR PEACE. Thousands of Vietnam veterans marched in Washington this April--against the war. Hundreds turned in their hard-won medals. Because

medals were meant to be worn proudly and these men could no longer feel proud. [sic] Could anything tell us more loudly and clearly that it's time not just to "wind down" the war, but to end it completely?

Farther down the page the message continued:

Strike one blow for peace. Write or wire your Congressman. Urge him to work for total withdrawal this year.

The Army also forayed into advertising in an effort to stimulate 1971 enlistments using the slogan TODAY'S ARMY WANTS TO JOIN YOU, and stressing the glamor of travel and guarantee of personal choice under the headline PICK THE TIME. PICK THE PLACE.

The major strategic development of several years that became symbolically tied to 1971 was the parity, some said superiority, which the Soviet Union had achieved as a global power compared to previously undisputed US leadership. America's previous global perspective now was directed inward by continuing unsolved domestic problems, aggravated by Vietnam. The loss of American willpower to influence the world beyond its shores was symbolized by the Senate's October rejection of continued funding of a 25-year-old foreign aid program. Not so dramatic, but just as indicative of diminishing US global interests, defense spending as a percentage of GNP fell almost two percent to under eight percent during 1971 while Soviet expenditures held steady at about 11 percent of GNP, as they had since 1967.

The trend was in keeping with Defense Secretary Melvin Laird's posture statement that year which described the new US strategy as one of "realistic deterrence." This strategy entailed the use of US equipment and training to prepare indigenous troops to fight their own country's battles in all cases except where America's most vital interest required the continued stationing of US forces. The introduction of intercontinental ballistic missiles both ashore and in submarines obviated the need for overseas basing of strategic strike forces, according to the party line.

Along with the end of the draft, scheduled for June 1973, and a gradually diminishing defense budget, officials proposed to reduce military manpower totals to 2.5 million or less, consistent with the Gates Report numbers, the majority of the reductions to occur in Southeast Asia, Japan, Okinawa, South Korea and the Philippines. Even so, the Army, most particularly of all the services, clearly saw recruitment as the greatest problem it faced in the long-term view of the decade of the 1970s. Underlying this recognition was the insidious problem of low morale. Officers reported being attacked with fragmentation grenades by their own men. Use of drugs increased. The acquittal of Captain Medina, the reduction of Calley's life sentence to 20 years, and the acquittal of Colonel Oren Henderson on charges of having failed to investigate the massacre at My Lai did little to dispel the Army's feeling that these men were scapegoats for the public's national shame and concern that standards of military conduct were declining.

Under Elmo Zumwalt, who in 1971 was in his second calendar year as the Navy Chief, uniformed morale continued to improve, at least among members of the younger set reacting positively to his sweeping regulation changes. Many old-timers, however, privately questioned the CNO's judgment in retiring World War II vintage ships (a plan begun under the previous CNO, Admiral Thomas Moorer) to make room in the budget for new construction and maintenance of the remaining fleet, which was shrunk from 900 to 600 ships. At the upper end of the Navy's officer corps, morale was hard to assess. There was some resentment of the actions of a relatively junior admiral who had been selected for the top post ahead of about a hundred flag officers senior to him.

No other event of 1971 so raised the public affairs blood pressure in the Pentagon as did the CBS television documentary "The Selling of the Pentagon," broadcast in prime time in February. Public affairs practitioners were especially outraged by its stated intent--"expose the excesses of military propaganda"--as Fred W. Friendly, writing in 1971, and Columbia University's Edward R. Murrow, professor of broadcast journalism, termed it. Advance promotion of the program said it would "investigate the range and variety of the Pentagon's public affairs activities," and the program included quotations from a purported 1970 memorandum from the President to the executive agencies criticizing "self-serving and wasteful public relations efforts" and "inappropriate promotional activities" which he wanted stopped. Chairman of the House

Armed Services Committee, Edward Hebert, reportedly was furious over the program, thereafter refusing to permit the military to have funds for the purchase of broadcast time to do recruiting advertising. The report gains credibility when one remembers that paid advertising was funded after Mr. Hebert lost his Louisiana congressional seat in 1976.

Both well-intentioned defense supporters and those generally critical of investigative journalism when it invaded the government's domain attacked CBS. Most notably, a special subcommittee subpoenaed Frank Stanton, CBS president, to bring all materials gathered and used in the making of the documentary when he testified. He did not, and CBS narrowly escaped a contempt citation when the House voted the action down in July. During the interim, however, the network endured well-publicized denouncements from other media, the Congress, and of course the administration in the voice of Vice President Spiro Agnew.

What can be said about this protracted incident, at least for purposes of this public affairs perspective, is that it dramatized vividly the climate of distrust and hostility which had swept over the properly adversarial but usually civil relationship between the administration under Nixon, the Congress, and the news media. It did not bode well for the forthcoming presidential election year coverage, nor for those whose business it was to assist the executive branch leadership in using the mass media to help understand and shape public opinion as the nation

moved, inexorably it seemed, toward the all-volunteer era. The same mood pervaded the military-media relationship in the Pentagon.

Social researchers of 1972 began evolving the notion of the "me" generation without actually calling it by that name. The Institute for Social Research in Michigan found that, although three out of four Americans thought they were doing well in their personal lives, only one in six was sure that the quality of national life was improving. The seeming paradox, earlier portrayed in a survey by Washington's Potomac Associates entitled "The Hopes and Fears of the American People," showed declining faith in government, disenchantment with large institutions, and a college-educated generation which did not see government as the panacea for America's ills.

The paradox was aggravated further by a social dichotomy: the ever-larger body of college-educated Americans accepted the idealistic notion that moral responsibility was an individual imperative not to be suborned to institutional demands, while the so-called blue-collar crowd tended to accept the decisions of constituted authority without significant regard for right-wrong judgments which occurred somewhere above them in the social hierarchy. This contract of the sort, "You make the decisions while I do the dirty work, and I will expect to be honored for my loyalty and patriotism," was fundamentally ruptured by incidents such as the Calley trial, wherein critics of the government's action decided the leadership had broken faith with the rank-and-file membership, while

accepting no blame for itself. In contrast, the sons and daughters of the blue-collar types, who had been sent to college on the sweat, tears, and hopes of their depression-reared parents, were morally certain Calley got what he deserved.

Sociologists speculated that the older generation reacted to a sense of helplessness, as they had in the past, by becoming more rigid and authoritarian in order to cope, while the younger generation became more cynical and fatalistic, incorrectly perceiving that their internal attitudes and external behavior counted very little in the shaping of events or institutions around them. They were starting to "tune out" according to a phrase which would find popularity later.

A similar mood of cynicism probably offset the political damage which might otherwise have been done to the Republican reelection campaign by the Watergate affair in that most Americans hardly expected more respectable activity in the political arena. Moreover, while the Democrats tore at each other, dividing their superior numbers among many candidates, President Nixon quietly followed the strategy set forth at the start of the campaign season. He would be the head of state, too busy with matters of grand strategy and the affairs of state to bother with the mundane business of partisan politics and primaries. His momentous visit to China, a nearing summit meeting with Soviet leaders, and his handling of the Vietnam withdrawal, seen by more and more voters as cautious but cor-

rect, captured the national loyalty, if not the enthusiasm, of a growing consensus of voters.

The parties' national conventions were predictable and relatively uneventful, a far cry from the Democratic experience of 1969. The election outcome reflected Nixon's year of diplomatic and foreign policy triumphs. Ultimately, the President scored what the Republican National Chairman, Robert Dole, called "a personal...but not a party triumph." His overwhelming victory over McGovern, winning all states but Massachusetts and the District of Columbia, was contrasted with a widened Democratic margin of superiority in the Senate and among state governorships, and only a few Republican seats gained in the House.

For the Pentagon in 1972, the May Moscow Summit meeting formally acknowledged that the Soviet Union had achieved superpower status. Although it was a political rather than a strategic realization, the agreements limiting offensive weapons recognized that neither side could reasonably expect to employ the nuclear option successfully. In a larger sense, the Moscow summit codified the relationship between the two superpowers and between the superpowers and Europe, while the Peking summit, if it may be called so, marked our recognition of China as a regional power in a part of the world where our influential presence, militarily at least, disappeared after 10 war-punctuated years.

These meetings and the intense media analysis which attended them, aside from the obvious political success which they earned the administration, suggested that Nixon and Kissinger were rethinking the global balance of power from one of bipolarity to a multipolar balance including Europe, China, and Japan. Although the two men were unable by year's end to bring to fruition Kissinger's premature October promise that in Vietnam "peace is at hand," their basic defense policy objectives were achieved. Most US forces were withdrawn from Vietnam, and the billions of dollars of saved resources were being diverted to reinvest in the strategic deterrent, maintain an umbrella for Europe and Japan, and prepare for the eventuality of the all-volunteer era.

Total US forces in South Vietnam dropped to 24,000 in December from a yearly high of 151,000, the last combat unit, the 3d Battalion of the 1st Infantry, having been withdrawn from DaNang on 12 August 1972. Only elements of the 7th Air Force and various administrative and support units remained. Large numbers of Air Force personnel had been repositioned in Thailand, but these also were programmed to be withdrawn, as were some 20,000 troops in South Korea.

Gradually Increasing Enlistments

Congress, by its relative silence on the subject, accepted the end of the draft projected for June 1973. The members approved a military pay

raise starting in January. Some 65 percent of the fiscal 1973 defense budget, in fact, was earmarked for personnel costs, even though total end strength would drop by some 55,000 to 2,336,000. The reductions would occur in Army and Air Force ranks, the Navy remaining relatively unchanged since it did not need to surge in order to support the Vietnam effort and was reducing the size of the fleet in any event.

Civilian defense planners sought every opportunity to replace military personnel with non-uniformed substitutes, and major operational staffs outside the Pentagon were faced with a series of horizontal reductions in manpower which, for example, drew the Atlantic Fleet staff down by 30 percent and did away with several subordinate command staffs altogether. To implement such demands, major realignment of command organization, mission, and function was required. Long-standing command relationships, which underpinned the experience of many mid-career officers who had heretofore provided stability during manpower upheavals, disappeared. Consequently, old-timers found themselves learning the new organization along with their junior colleagues and, for a while, chaos reigned supreme. Also, important leadership positions were filled by a cadre of officers who were spot-promoted to the grades of captain and major at the height of Vietnam-era requirements, advancing through the ranks not only by their ability, but by the numbers demanded.

Of the three services, the Army was experiencing the most difficulty with the change to an all-volunteer force. The "fragging" incidents in combat units reportedly had doubled. At the same time, the Navy was having its own morale problems as a result of Zumwalt's aggressive remodeling of tradition-bound rules and regulations designed to make the service more attractive and less restrictive. As he reportedly said, implementation was difficult because so many traditionalists had to be "dragged kicking and screaming into the twentieth century." Cases of sabotage aboard ship and growing organized resistance from blacks to established order were reported, the most often reported cases being from the carriers U.S.S. CONSTELLATION in November and U.S.S. KITTY HAWK while in Vietnam waters. The racial problems became enough of an issue to stimulate the House Armed Services Committee to investigate and keep the service's public affairs establishment busy day after day, responding to media inquiries, demands, accusations of coverup, and requests for confirmation of rumors about other major incidents.

The Air Force struggled with its own negative news in the case of General Lavelle, former commander of air forces in South Vietnam, who had quietly retired from the service earlier in the year, before the Senate learned from a public-spirited intelligence sergeant's letter to one of its members that the general had ordered some 28 air strikes over North Vietnam, then "fabricated" hostile action to justify his arbitrary decisions. Moreover, the strikes occurred when US policy was touted as

"protective reaction" to action by the North Vietnamese and, if known, might have upset the delicate Paris peace negotiations (which in fact had stalled because of accusations and counteraccusations that each side was violating understandings about so-called unarmed overflights of the north).

When Lavelle was called to testify before a congressional committee, he defended his action and implied that General Creighton Abrams, US ~~Commander~~ ^{Commander} in Vietnam at the time of the incident, knew of his subterfuge, thereby causing numerous media editorials speculating about military brass who could ignore traditional civilian control in so cavalier a manner without a trace of conscience, and then be rewarded with a quiet retirement. The incident also caused consternation in Army circles as Abrams' nomination to Army Chief of Staff was delayed until the implications of Lavelle's testimony could be laid to rest. The public, either uncaring or uninformed, did not take particular notice of such politicomilitary dealings. In fact, voluntary enlistments into the combat branches were on the upswing, according to media reports. Better than 3,000 per month were joining and, while this was 2,000 shy of one-for-one replacement, it was ten times better than the low ebb recruiters had endured during their Vietnam-era experience. More likely, the previous public hostility which the military establishment believed was an attack upon its very legitimacy, but may only have been frustration over American's failure to win the war, was diminishing along with combat losses and draft calls.

In hindsight, it might have been discernible that the public did not blame the military for the Vietnam failure. There may even have been grass roots support for the view that we might have won if the military had been given tactical command free of White House involvement. It certainly was an assertion appearing in some editorials of the period. Too, the return of American POWs in February and March of 1973 sponsored an outpouring of positive public opinion which recognized their sacrifices.

In a larger sense, too, the President's dramatic foreign-policy adventures, so widely reported as "You are there" media events, likely had refocused much of America's attention away from its internal economic and racial problems and onto our role as a world leader, and the traditional legitimacy of the military in this drama was recovered.

There is in retrospect an urge to draw parallels between this period in American political history and the transition from the Carter to the Reagan presidency. Nixon promised an end to the draft as a then-perceived important plank in the election victory plan. President Reagan is on the record as opposing the peacetime draft registration which Carter imposed in part to send a message to the Soviet Union regarding its invasion of Afghanistan and, he said, to improve US military readiness. Meanwhile, the military leadership has testified that a return to an active draft would not replace the "hemorrhage of talent" in

the mid-career, highly trained cadre of enlisted technicians and some officer categories of specialized training.

At the same time, with each new call for draft registration, modest anti-draft rallies and demonstrations are dutifully reported in the media. For example, on 5 January 1981, local Washington TV news reporters interviewed James Bond, Deputy Director of the Selective Service System, who noted that 3.8 million men (95 percent of those required) signed up with their local post office in 1980, and he expected the same or a better percentage in 1981 despite anti-draft demonstrations. On the other side of the issue, anti-draft spokesmen are quoted as saying they trust President Reagan will stick to his campaign commentary of opposition to a peacetime draft as a "meaningless gesture" and end the current registration requirement.

The difference between the Vietnam draft era demonstrations and those today may be perceived as one of quantity rather than quality. Mr. Bond's remarks on NBC-TV clearly imply that the "rightness" of the policy is borne out by the number of "willing" participants as compared with the number of "unwilling" demonstrators. One suspects this same sort of ledger-balance mentality pervaded the thinking for or against continuation of the draft in 1971-1973, especially when one recalls the reelection urge of the Nixon administration. It may have smothered any urge to conduct rational public debate about whether the country could preserve its military establishment at a level consistent with its role as Free World leader.

Chapter One Endnotes

1. 18 USC 1913, from which Congress exempted itself, prohibits the use of appropriated funds by a public servant in so-called public sector or "grass roots" lobbying, either to influence Congress on pending legislation, to lobby for appropriated funds, or to support special interest groups by giving them information from executive branch internal sources. This has been interpreted to prohibit opinion surveys as part of an ongoing public affairs program. On the other hand, a public servant can advocate an administration position, and the President and executive branch has the duty to keep the Congress informed about the execution of programs. It is under this constitutional responsibility that the extensive public affairs activity of the executive branch finds its cover.

2. The author vividly recalls numerous broken windows in new buildings, National Guard presence, and confrontation between antiwar demonstrators and, for example, Dow Chemical recruiters at the University of Wisconsin Madison Campus while he attended postgraduate school there 1969-1971.

3. Martin Anderson, the so-called "house intellectual" of the Nixon administration, has been credited with selling Nixon on the idea of the AVF. A reliable Republican source, speaking on a nonattribution basis to National War College students in December 1980 about his personal

knowledge of AVF decisions during Nixon era, recalled that Anderson almost single-handedly convinced the President to include the promise to do away with the draft in his campaign speeches. (Anderson figured prominently in the transition team preparing the Reagan administration to assume office.) The Washington Post, in a 18 January 1981 biography of Anderson, also credits him with primary responsibility for influencing Nixon to abolish the draft.

2. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO THE PUBLIC

I have directed the Commission to develop a comprehensive plan for eliminating conscription and moving toward an all-volunteer armed force. The Commission will study a broad range of possibilities for increasing the supply of volunteers for service, including increased pay, benefits, recruitment incentives and other practicable measures to make military careers more attractive to young men. . . . I have instructed the Department of Defense and other agencies of the Executive Branch to support this study and provide needed information and assistance as a matter of high priority.

Richard M. Nixon
27 March 1969

Anticipating the Transition to AVF

The President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force, better known as the Gates Commission after its chairman and former Defense Secretary Thomas Gates, produced in February 1970 a document of some 211 pages calling for an end to conscription and a return to an all-volunteer force.¹ It is noteworthy that, of the 211 pages, only two and one-half advised how recruiting efforts should be changed to support a volunteer program. Perhaps the incidental treatment of this vital aspect of the AVF concept is attributable to the fact that the 15 members of the Commission and 51 staff members did not include a single identifiable advertising or public relations expert.

The Commission's lack of expertise in public communications is best illustrated by quoting in part from the report's chapter called "Recruitment" as follows:

Recruiters play an important role in influencing young men to enlist in the armed services. Ideally, recruiters should be dedicated career men who are skilled in the art of salesmanship . . . a prospective recruiter should have a positive attitude toward the military as a profession, some aptitude for a public relations role and a genuine desire to undertake recruiting duty . . . more advertising in mass media will be both required and rewarding once an all-volunteer force has been instituted, for the elimination of conscription will coincide with improved incentives in the military. Visits to high schools by recruiters, films, performances by special military units, and other appearances will continue to contribute to a positive image for the military.

On the other hand, the Commission showed some appreciation for the force of public opinion, noting that "As it stands today the draft is a major source of antagonism toward the military, which erodes public support of the armed services. Because the draft is unnecessary, an all-volunteer force offers an obvious opportunity to curb the growth of anti-militaristic sentiment." These remarks contradict other parts of the report which declare that the force consisted mostly of volunteers. One has to wonder what motivated so many volunteers to join in the midst of so much anti-militaristic sentiment.

The Commission correctly recognized the need to improve the quality of military life in order to make it more attractive to the would-be

volunteer. The positive themes of increased pay and benefits, fewer family separations, and greater service recognition of the value of its manpower, reoccur throughout the report. Commission members evidently understood an important axiom of sound public relations planning: the organization must function ethically with due regard for the public interest, then tell the public that it is doing a good job. However, the report never tells the reader how the good news should be conveyed. Instead, the Commission apparently assumed public understanding automatically would result from a change of policy, declaring that "The termination of the draft should immediately enhance the prestige of enlisted service. . . . the knowledge that those in the armed forces have freely chosen to serve their country cannot but improve their image--in their own eyes as well as in the eyes of society." If AVF public relations were that predictable, the services should have made that transition to volunteerism painlessly, and retention also should have improved from 1973 onward. Neither phenomenon occurred.

Continuing Dispute Over Draft versus AVF

The Gates report failed to note that the seventies were especially conducive to a switch to volunteer manning because of the following:

- o The ever-increasing number of 17 to 21 year olds who could not find employment because of the economic slump included enough young men easily enticed to join the military.

- o The draft called up only a few of those eligible, while others were excused because of college, parenthood, ministerial or other deferments. In essence, the random lotteries seemed like games of Russian roulette where some of the players knew which pistol chambers were empty. Those who could not trust chance and did not know when the pistol would fire excused themselves, claiming higher ethical integrity than the majority and went to Canada and Sweden. The rest of them waited in quiet desperation. From a political point of view, because it was not equally shared by all the citizenry, the draft was unjustifiable.
- o Force levels were significantly down from peak Vietnam manning and the President had reinterpreted the formerly-assumed US responsibility to deter the Soviet Union from worldwide hegemony.
- o Nixon believed his resounding election victory gave him a mandate to carry out his campaign promise to abolish the draft.
- o Americans had developed a distrust of big government and its motives because of Vietnam, and wanted its influence upon their lives reduced. Those of draft age particularly sought relief from the threat of being drafted to fight an unpopular war.
- o Within the military there was an increasing shift of attention to more sophisticated weaponry and a concomitant dependence upon fewer, more highly specialized, and therefore more educable, individuals. The need to undertake a more selective way of attracting the best of America's youth became evident.
- o The military was not about to disagree with its Commander in Chief when he had already decided the draft was politically untenable. Those few in-service commentators who wondered aloud about starting AVF manning so soon after an obviously unpopular period of American military history were paid little attention.

The Gates Commission was dominated in its expertise by economists, most notably Milton Friedman, and by industrialists and financiers not accustomed to the give-and-take of open public debate about their intimate professional judgments. They did not agree with the majority of those panels and commissions which had considered the draft issue before 1970. The Defense Department conducted a 1966 study which supported

continuation of the draft, as did the National Advisory Commission of Selective Service and the Civilian Advisory Panel on Military Manpower Procurement, known respectively as the Marshall Commission and the Clark Panel. The Marshall report concluded that a volunteer military was not flexible enough to respond to changing world conditions, was too costly, and could lead to undesirable social effects, such as a diminution of patriotic spirit and racial balance. It also expressed fear about possible isolation of the military community, as an elite or mercenary force, from the mainstream of the nation's citizenry. The Clark Panel later concurred with the Marshall Commission in all respects.

However, a number of unofficial studies and subsequent reports were also undertaken by the House of Representatives, economists, and social scientists whose pronouncements agreed with public personalities from a broad political spectrum who supported the desirability of an all-volunteer military. Their names, if not their expertise on manpower issues, were most recognizable, including such prominent individuals as Milton Friedman, John Kenneth Galbraith, Barry Goldwater, George McGovern, Linus Pauling, Adlai Stevenson, and Norman Thomas.

The Rand Corporation's AVF expert, Richard V. L. Cooper, believed the initial stages of the post-draft debate of the early 1970s, in the absence of a more formal structure, were conducted primarily in the popular media and academic and military journals. Media stories each month

told how the recruiters had fared in achieving their previous 30-day goal. Editors interspersed monthly recruiting reports with in-depth "think" pieces usually found in journals such as the New Yorker and Atlantic. Representative of a growing list of AVF criticism, was the 24 December 1973 Los Angeles Times editorial which read in part:

Whether the volunteer Army was a well-intentioned experiment with honest expectations of success, or whether--as we frequently argued--it was an essentially selfish and foredoomed effort to free the middle class from the burden of military service is now irrelevant. The important thing is that the volunteer approach clearly has failed, and that it must be replaced by a system that will assure adequate manpower of necessary quality.

As with most growing debates, this one, too, took on some angry tones. Milton Friedman, who by now must have felt a vested interest in defending volunteerism, argued in a Newsweek piece of 11 February 1974, that "middle-rank Army officers and some retired officers in civilian positions" were conducting "deliberate sabotage" of the AVF program.

The debate quickly subsided after the first two years of the AVF era. By then the country had entered a serious economic slump, and the media, along with the public, shifted its attention from the AVF to more pressing concerns.

Because of civilian unemployment, the services were successful competitors for qualified enlistees. Between 1970 and 1973 the number of

military recruiters increased by 65 percent, and recruiting expenditures more than doubled. Pentagon manpower experts were copying civilian recruitment techniques to balance the military manpower equation, paying high marketing costs for advertising and recruitment when the economy was surging and unemployment was low, while enjoying the luxury of a large "walk-in trade" at the recruiting offices when no one else was hiring.

This in turn gave rise to new criticism of the AVF that the military was an employer of last resort, attractive to the private sector only when no other employment options were available to growing legions of unemployed youth. At such times the private sector skimmed the cream of America's youth from the top, taking the best and the brightest, and the military selected from the leftovers--those youngsters less trainable, less motivated, and overrepresented by racial minorities. According to this argument, eventually the military ranks would become unacceptably nonrepresentative of the civilian populace, and in wartime the underprivileged would do most of the dying. Senator Edward Kennedy in a 7 May 1974, press release characterized the situation as one in which "disadvantaged citizens" were "economically coerced" to join the military when they could find no other work.

Accommodating Divergent Interests Within the Ranks

The military, too, began to feel coercion from the often contradictory demands of the AVF era as it struggled to accommodate divergent interests within the ranks. As professional communicators, military public affairs experts found themselves at the center of a number of opposing factions.

First, the operating forces assumed no direct responsibility for the success or failure of the AVF effort. Save for the recruiting commands, no other units conducted avid searches for ways to enhance public perceptions of the military as an employer. As an example, until 1972 the Navy had no public affairs experts assigned to recruiting on a regional basis--they were only at the headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. Moreover, when some 20 new regional public affairs jobs were created, primarily in the grades of major and below, those officers available for reassignment to the new positions generally resisted going to recruiting staff duty. It was not merely fear of the unknown. Rather, junior public affairs officers, trying to win the respect of their seniors, sought what were believed to be the most challenging assignments available--jobs in the operating forces. When juniors asked seniors about the value of the new recruiting jobs in enhancing the prospects for promotion, most senior public affairs officers belittled them. The same low opinion of recruiting jobs prevailed among officers in the warfare

branches, so most tried to avoid such assignments, preferring to concentrate on improving combat skills. As a result, initially the recruiting commands were not receiving the best personnel, and those individuals who could not avoid such duty were not at first highly motivated by the assignment. Milton Friedman's criticism about senior officer sabotage of the AVF had some credence.

Second, under President Nixon's avowed policy of detente and reduced US military overseas involvement, and the Congress's increasing focus on domestic issues at the expense of defense spending, the senior military leadership feared a return to the same low federal budget priority it suffered after every previous war. If there was one unspoken dictum for every military leader, every speechwriter, and every public affairs advisor to a flag or general officer, it was to keep America defense-conscious--talk about the Soviet threat--during this critical period when the nation's attention was drifting to detente and arms limitation.

Third, the CBS attack on the defense establishment, called "Selling of the Pentagon," seemed almost conspiratorial at the time, coming as it did at the end of Vietnam and at the start of the AVF. Certainly, the documentary implied that the Defense Department was improperly using tax dollars to persuade the country to spend more and more on the military, overplaying a threat of Soviet dominance as she forged ahead of the US in military spending. The US Navy said the Soviets were building

a "blue water," offensively capable Navy intrinsically different from a coastal navy with only a defensive ability. The services conducted congressional and media junkets to major military exercises all over the world, and spokespersons narrated circus-like "firepower demonstrations" in what now seems an archaic way to capture attention. Shortly after the CBS program critized the so-called firepower demonstrations, the phrase was stricken from the military lexicon. But the damage was done because Congress imposed a ceiling on Defense Department external public affairs expenditures, that amount spent annually to tell the public the military's story. The limitation was viewed departmentally as an aspersion cast upon the agency's veracity and professionalism. Some argue that the ceiling inhibited the ability of the military public affairs community to adequately counteract negative military stories, those usually being the ones to make big headlines and thus have greater impact upon public opinion than favorable stories. In any event, the congressional ceiling on military external public affairs expenditures, whether resulting from the political backlash caused by the CBS documentary or not, paralleled a White House memorandum directing the Defense Department and other agencies to reduce their public affairs activity. At the same time, however, AVF demands had not abated and recruitment advertising budgets were rising, causing one to wonder about the consistency of governmental policy.

Criticisms of AVF Advertising

A 21 November 1973 Advertising Age story called "How US Uses Advertising--A Growing Activity" sounded concern about increasing government use of the medium:

Some say it's not advertising at all. Some say it's advertising of the strongest kind, with Big Brotherish potential. Others, probably a majority, merely get an impression: Officialdom promoting ideas and actions that usually sound sensible...the federal government is deeply into it . . . in the neighborhood of \$110,000,000 this fiscal year . . . the big military recruiting chunk of about \$80,000,000--up \$24,000,000 from last year--might even be hiked further by Congress because of pressures brought on by discontinuation of the draft . . . the total expenditure has gone up sharply in the past few years.

The negative tone of the story sharpened when it reported that the value of donated public service time and space, a sizable \$224 million, jumped to a whopping \$1 billion when military public service ads were included in the government tally. This dollar estimate is too large to be believable, but the inference for the ad industry at the time was clear: increasing dependence upon large government-paid advertising accounts eventually could cause some agencies to lose their financial independence, through diverse accounts, and subject them to undue government influence. Noting that the government-paid advertising program was by far biggest for military recruiting accounts, with the Army alone planning \$34 million in print advertising, the trade journal implicitly

warned the ad agencies that large amounts of public service announcement (PSA) time and space donated to recruiting, when added to the paid government accounts, might not be in their continuing best interests.

Meanwhile, a controversy both in and outside the Army had developed over how its recruitment advertising funds would be spent. In 1973 the Army's decision to continue with N. W. Ayer & Son Agency, using the overall magazine and newspaper ad slogan TODAY'S ARMY WANTS TO JOIN YOU, engendered complaints from other agencies that selection criteria bringing the account to Ayer were stacked in its favor. The discontent in the industry added credibility to concerns expressed by Advertising Age at a time when the military needed cooperation in placing PSA ads as part of its overall campaign. Because recruiters in 1973 had little or no experience as ad salesmen, their task of maximizing media use of PSA was difficult. At the same time, some career Army officers vociferously criticized that the slogan itself was weak and did not attract dedicated personnel. It seemed no one was happy.

Not to be overtaken by the Army, both the Navy and the Air Force in the incipient period of the AVF were accelerating their infant ad programs as well. Grey Advertising Agency's multi⁷million dollar Navy account was won in competition with three other firms who had answered the service's request for bids. Yet 37 more firms, also invited to bid, never answered the invitation, reportedly because they found the

prerequisites of the bid procedure too complex. Also, some argue, ours is a prestige account, but does not earn great profits for any agency.

The Air Force continued with D'Arcy-MacManus and Masius, which it had used in previous years, and the Marine Corps stayed with J. Walter Thompson Company, the world's largest ad agency, as it had for 27 years.

What Congress ultimately approved for fiscal year 1973 as a 68.3 million dollar recruitment advertising budget for all of the Defense Department did not come easily to the services. A part of that amount, about \$8 million, was earmarked for Joint Advertising and Market Research Program (JAMRP) costs associated with a so-called "umbrella" or corporate-type advertising which would combine into a single ad a pitch for all the services. It was hoped this one-year test program would demonstrate that joint ads were just as effective, while more efficient than duplicative service ads, in attracting attention to military job opportunities.

Congress approved only \$68 million of the \$80 million advertising budgets requested in fiscal year 1973, perhaps because some believed the services would find it difficult to get free time and space for ads if they poured too much money into paid advertisements. Although no one in the military services or their respective advertising agencies was certain what the impact of buying more air time might be, a number of considerations surrounded the decision to purchase more advertising time

even if it placed some of the free public service announcements, so-called PSAs, in jeopardy. Such considerations included the following:

- o Radio and television stations, using a public resource--the electronic broadcast spectrum--as they do, are required by federal regulation to demonstrate they operate in the public interest or risk the loss of the broadcast license at renewal time. A station can inexpensively meet a part of this requirement by scheduling PSAs, supplied by innumerable non~~profit~~ organizations seeking free air time, in lieu of some paid commercials. While ordinarily many more PSAs are supplied than a station can play, and still have time for entertainment programming, the more professionally produced and entertaining PSAs become very popular, the best videotapes actually deteriorating from repeated use in as little as a year. Some PSAs become legendary, as in the case of the Air Force's sign-off, so named because television stations use it to end broadcasting for that 24-hour period. Called "High Flight" after the poem narrated by a voice heard over the film, many late-night viewers remember it for the eloquent closing phrase ". . . and touched the face of God." Many viewers remember the jet fighter, sun glinting off its wings as it soars above the clouds, and ask the stations to play "the Air Force film" more often. This, the best of all possible circumstances in advertising, is good for station visibility, good for Air Force visibility, and elicits positive audience reaction. It may also help recruiting, but it is virtually impossible to quantify the positive impact.
- o Although stations use PSAs, seldom do the announcements appear during "prime time" when maximum rates can be charged for paid advertising because more of the potential audience is listening or watching. It does the military little good if a recruiting PSA is broadcast at times when the target audience is at a disco, sporting event, or asleep.
- o National audience surveys confirm that the vast majority of those in the prime recruit market derive most of their information from electronic, not print, media. It follows that a significant portion of the advertising budget ought to be spent in radio and television markets.

Still, the Congress was not convinced of the value of more paid advertising. An Army experiment using paid radio and television ads

during three months in 1971 spent \$10.6 million specifically authorized by the legislators, and demonstrated increased awareness of the Army and greater traffic in the recruiting stations. However, not until fiscal year 1977 did the services receive congressional approval to buy radio and television time. By then, total DOD expenditures, begun in 1972 as the post-draft advertising effort sought to attract volunteers through newspapers, magazines, outdoor advertising, and public service time, had reached more than \$300 million. This figure was far in excess of the modest \$6.5 million the services spent for broadcast advertising in their first year in the medium in fiscal 1976. In that same year, the Congress reduced its recruitment advertising budget request of \$104 million by 35 percent to \$67 million, although the year before it had approved \$102 million. It is remarkable that any sort of coherent advertising campaign, usually requiring several years of consistent policy to mature, could be conducted amidst the first years' rollercoaster congressional budgeting decisions--a five-year history of notable inconsistency.

However, in fairness, the Congress, especially the House Armed Services Committee, was dealing with an exceedingly complex subject about which neither the members nor the Defense Department witnesses testifying before the HASC knew very much with certainty. For example, in its May 1972 report, a special recruiting and retention subcommittee said:

The paid advertising program created an inequity for these stations which had provided free time for

recruitment advertising. As a result of this inequity, a number of radio and television stations indicated in writing that they would cease all transmission of public service military recruiting advertising. There is no estimate as to how many additional stations might reduce their public service broadcasting of Army recruiting ads if paid advertising were reinstated.

At the same time, Broadcast Advertisers Report, Inc., reported to the military services that the value of their PSA time on television in FY 1974 was \$5.6 million. Unfortunately, BAR measured only 260 of the 1,000 television stations and none of the 8,000 radio stations. One is inclined to suspect this figure as being too low when compared with the Advertising Age estimates given earlier in this chapter, therefore providing a poor data base for decisionmaking either by Congress or the services themselves.

The Air Force thought its PSA time was worth \$13 million and the Navy \$5 million. The Army and Marine Corps would not estimate the value of free time received in 1974. But, in contrast to the HASC's subcommittee finding, radio and television executives were quoted by some Defense Department representatives that PSA time would not be lost to paid military recruiting advertising. Their comments are credible because the burden is on each station manager to fill his entire broadcast day with sound and/or images--an expensive proposition at best--and PSA spots are delivered by eager recruiters at no cost to the station. Moreover, the spots usually are high quality and timely, and their use demonstrates the

public-service-mindedness of the station management when station programming logs are reviewed at broadcast renewal time.

From another perspective, the advertising account executives controlling the military recruiting programs in 1974 reported to the GAO (Government Accounting Office) that 60 to 90 percent of PSA broadcast time would be lost if the services directed them to start buying time. These comments are not as credible as those of the radio and television executives because PSA exposure reinforced the print, outdoor, and direct mail campaigns which the contracted agencies were conducting, which reinforcement cost them nothing.

Inconclusive Results of Advertising

The effectiveness of advertising in bringing candidates to the recruiters, the ultimate test of the efficiency of AVF recruitment advertising, was beyond reasonable quantitative evaluation. Rather, specific ads using tear-out application blanks, and direct mail campaigns which sent literature to prospective recruits, were the yardsticks by which ad agencies measured their marketing efforts. Typically, a campaign using these techniques to count responses to an ad would cost about \$30 per response.

As regards the number of responses in so-called "advertising lead" campaigns, the GAO in its 1976 study of recruiting advertising effectiveness was critical in its brief analysis:

The military services received over 900,000 leads during FY 1974. Of the 550,000 recruited into the military services, only 39,000 can be traced to people who sent in leads. Of the 39,000 leads that eventually entered the service, only about 20,000 actually entered the service to whom [sic] they sent the lead What this all seems to mean is that only a few people who enter the services can be traced to advertising leads. More than 500,000 of the 550,000 who enlisted . . . never sent in a lead. It also meant that advertising leads are not a good source of recruits and not a good measure of advertising effectiveness.

According to one Navy recruiting public affairs officer at that time, this GAO analysis is an oversimplification of the real problem: the failure of the recruiting "sales force" to follow up on leads in a timely manner. Also, in 1974, the services had no closed-loop tracking system, whereby they could track persons who joined and ask them why they joined in order to strengthen an advertising appeal targeting those reasons.

The GAO study, as well as other sources, reported the results of the Gilbert Youth Research, Inc., study of youth attitudes toward military service conducted between May 1971 and November 1973. The national survey revealed that the prime recruit market of high school-age youth ranked magazines third behind television and posters as recruiting information sources. Ultimately, the data revealed that television PSA spots delivered to broadcasters by the recruiters, costing the services only \$3.8 million that year, were the information sources most often used by respondents to the survey.

Of course, this is not to suggest that television alone could sustain the kind of information flow necessary to thoroughly reach the young adult audience, or the so-called "influencer audience" including parents, teachers, coaches, and high school guidance counselors who watch television only a fraction as much time as teenage audiences. A broad spectrum of popular media, including trade journals, is employed in the information campaign.

The GAO youth survey also showed that the largest portion of the male youth population has no motivation to enter the military. Logically, the reason most often given for this lack of motivation in the early data of the Gilbert survey was the risk of injury, undoubtedly relating to the ongoing Vietnam conflict. By 1973, however, this reason fell to third place behind a distaste for strict discipline and time spent away from home, reasons which had always ranked high in the responses.

Of equal or greater interest to the public affairs specialist were reasons of those who answered the survey by saying that there ~~at~~-least was a possibility they would enter the service. As incentives, they listed the following: (1) acquisition of a trade or skill applicable to civilian life; (2) travel, excitement, and new experience; (3) choice of service or branch; (4) opportunity for advanced education and training; (5) opportunity to serve country; and (6) overall benefits. Particularly of note, the respondents clearly indicated that the incentive which would have the greatest chance of inducing them to enlist would be four years of college in return for four years of service in the military. (Congress seems to be awakening to this fact and looking for a new GI Bill.)

Perhaps the most usable information gleaned from the surveys, from an advertising agency point of view, was the respondents' image of each

service. The GAO extracted the core of this subjective material in its 1976 report, as follows:

About half of all young men were distinctively hostile while most remained more neutral but tending to the negative. When the remaining numbers were asked for their preference among the services, about 30 percent chose the Air Force, another 30 percent chose the Navy, while 20 percent chose the Army, and 15 percent the Marine Corps. The two most important motives for enlistment were self-development and training. The image of the Air Force seemed somewhat richer in detail related to training and education. The Marines were perceived as wanting "a few good men" and as demanding toughness; physical capabilities; and offering masculinity, prestige, and physical action. The Navy image was more complex, involving rather romantic ideas about travel, the sea, good living, as well as opportunities for training in career skills. The Army also had a complex image--the biggest, oldest, and most basic of the services. It offers opportunities for learning also, but it is the service which is easiest to get in and least demanding of physical or mental skills. Young men, on the average, did not speak of it with much enthusiasm.

In general, studies done in the first half of the 1970s to ascertain shifts in the images which respondents had of the services did not show any over the period of the first four years. The Air Force maintained its ranking as the first choice of the services for those who said they would enlist because it was seen as the most prestigious and elite. The Navy stayed second because it seemed the most exciting and offered foreign travel. The Marine Corps and Army usually tied for third, the former being tough, demanding, and physical, and the latter being biggest, oldest, and most basic.

Most disturbing of all to recruiters in the early AVF days of considerable social research into attitudes about the military, there was no upward shift in the perceptions of America's youth; the smug assurance by the Gates Commission that the change to a voluntary force in and of itself would alter national perceptions was false. Moreover, the raises in pay and benefits did not cause any greater interest in joining the military.

While the hoped-for improvement in audience perceptions of the military services was not forthcoming, nevertheless the impressions of each service held by the respondents to the Gilbert survey and others closely paralleled the picture of that service which the ad agencies were attempting to convey. From that standpoint, the advertising campaigns were successful either in creating awareness where none existed, or in accurately mirroring a public image already in existence.

Naturally, this limited success did not defuse the criticism leveled at the large budgets expended on recruiting advertising between 1973 and 1976 when, for example, the GAO issued its report. The same cry was heard then as had been heard in corporate boardrooms ever since the first profits were spent on advertising: "How effective is this advertising and how can I measure it?" or "When will we have spent just enough but not too much on this public relations campaign?"

The Gates Commission, the GAO in its report, and various corporate officers all have succumbed to the same misconceptions ever since the first dollars were spent on what we have come to know as advertising and public relations. Each has inadvertently assumed the consciousness of the target audience to be a fixed entity beginning as a blank movie screen waiting for the advertising campaign to cast an impression upon it. By this presumption one merely had to find the proper market research technique to tap the consciousness some time after the advertising campaign had begun, then compare the difference between the blank movie screen and later impressions indelibly etched upon audience consciousness after the advertising information was disseminated in the marketplace. This oversimplified summarization of the patterns by which criticisms of the inexact art of public relations and advertising are developed nonetheless describes accurately the disparity between a governmental bureaucracy bent upon quantitative analysis of its expenditure of tax dollars and the confounding inexactness of the public relations practitioner's art.

Nevertheless, at the time of this writing, the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School is reported to be concluding research into the development of improved methods for measuring advertising effectiveness. As the GAO notes in its report, the essence of the technique is to isolate advertising as a variable in controlled market areas, then vary the amount of information disseminated and look for changes in the

objective--in the case of recruiting advertising this corresponds to the number of candidates who contact the recruiter and ultimately are enlisted as a result of the advertising campaign. There is, however, an inherent difficulty in the Wharton approach when applied to recruiting. As with most marketing research, the Wharton effort is focused principally upon product purchase as the objective, and not upon a "consumer action" which entails making a serious career decision. Despite researchers' claims that there should be comparability between the two different audience actions--buying a product and enlisting in the service--it would be difficult to draw similarities until exhaustive and costly testing programs had been conducted.

It is understandable if by now the reader wonders whether there have been any positive returns from the millions spent by the Defense Department on recruiting advertising since the AVF began. Regrettably, a yes or no answer is not possible.

No direct correlation exists between increasing advertising efforts and increasing the number of recruits or their quality. Neither have reductions in advertising expenditures in some years shown any poorer results at the recruiting stations. Further, when one service has moved into new areas of advertising, as in the case of Army and broadcast advertising tests, or spent significantly more on its advertising than another service, no apparent change resulted in the number of recruits it

has attracted. In other words, the Air Force has remained the most popular of the services, followed by Navy, Army, and Marines in that order. When some services have failed to make quota, generally all the services have had the same problem, suggesting it had more to do with the economy or other variables than a failure of specific campaign strategy.

Although the media and selected advertising agencies have benefited monetarily from the AVF experience, collectively their reaction has been mixed. In articles and editorials between 1973 and 1977, Advertising Age was critical of the amounts the government spent on advertising in general and military recruiting advertising in particular. A 7 April 1975 editorial flatly stated that military advertising accounts were too big. In its 14 February 1977 issue, an article written by two professors of the School of Journalism, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Thomas A. Bowers and James J. Mullen, was entitled "\$100,000,000 US Advertising Budget May Threaten Freedom of Press." The magazine's italicized "teaser" designed to summarize the article and attract the readers' attention, was as follows:

Government advertising is a form of propaganda distributed internally and paid for by the target audience The young American who likes his civilian status . . . may not relish seeing his or his parents' taxes paying for an expensive campaign to enlist him in the Army. As an even greater danger . . . a magazine publisher may be reluctant to risk the government's wrath when 5 percent or 8 percent of his advertising comes from government sources and when

government agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service are in a position to harass an unfriendly publisher.

Even more relevant to the concerns of the watchful taxpayer might be the observation the authors make in the critical article which reads as follows:

. . . in the case of the government, no requirement of profitability exists. If \$X of advertising in publications A, B, and C do not get the job done, then perhaps \$1.5X would. Who would say, "You could get the same results with only \$0.8X in publications D, E, and F?" This means that the government could follow a policy of using advertising to reward friends and punish enemies with far less concern about side effects (like enraged stockholders losing profits) than could a business advertiser.

Of course, experience has shown that Congress is at least as critical of the Defense Department's collective expenditures for recruiting advertising as would be any stockholders meeting. However, the authors raise another, perhaps more insidious, danger inherent in government advertising. That is the matter of fraudulent advertising, which they characterize as follows:

Unfortunately, it would be too much for anyone to expect that the federal government would punish itself for fraudulent advertising should the circumstances arise. In fact, the Federal Trade Commission has already indicated its refusal to police government advertising. In 1972, Rep. John J. Mooney of New York complained to the FTC that direct mail advertising sent by a recruiting agent in New York was misleading.

The FTC backed away with the excuse that it had no jurisdiction over federal agencies.

Finally, the authors enjoin the Congress and the public to seriously consider whether further growth of government advertising should continue, closing the article with the comment, "Perhaps the problem is serious enough to question the wisdom of trying to maintain a volunteer Army."

Further Pros and Cons

Obviously, the impact of recruitment advertising on the advertising industry was not always positive, and the infusion of a great many tax dollars, while never refused by the agencies or media, failed to win the unanimous gratitude one might have expected from advertising executives. Nonetheless, AVF recruiting advertising enjoyed considerable support.

The GAO, in the concluding analysis of its 1976 report, declared the AVF recruiting effort successful, but gave no credence to assumptions that advertising helped. Instead, it found advertising contributions to the success to be modest at best, attributing recruiting gains primarily to changes in organization. For example, the GAO recalled the expansion of recruiting forces in all services, the improved training of recruiters in the latest marketing procedures, the raising of salaries and the application of variable enlistment bonuses, and the use of incentive pay

for recruiters themselves. In a more critical vein, the GAO also noted that duplication, competition for the same audience, lack of standardization in identifying true costs, and different operating procedures between the services, made any attempt to analyze and compare the services' recruitment advertising efforts an exercise in futility.

Correctly, the GAO found the services were "left pretty much on their own as to how the money should be spent." The rationale behind this laissez faire attitude was that each of the services had its own unique character and personality--its own peculiar image--which already was imprinted upon the public consciousness. Moreover, tradition, custom, and even the service-parochial attitudes of some congressmen, militated against creating still another "purple suited" Defense Department secretariat to manage the recruiting effort.

On the other hand, the incentives which have attracted youth to the services, at least since the 1960s, are common to all the military departments. These are the learning of a transferable skill, travel, excitement, new experiences, and the opportunity to select location or branch within service. The most attractive incentive, some form of the GI Bill, was of course denied the services at a crucial time in AVF development and a less attractive variable enlistment education program substituted in its stead. (In 1981 Congress considered reinstatement of a new form of the GI Bill which would dramatically enhance military

benefits.) At the same time, other federal educational assistance programs have burgeoned, providing still another disincentive for better-qualified high school graduates to consider the military. The situation that confronts the recruiter when he enters the marketplace of high school youth seeking their attention and future enlistment is formidable. Consider the following:

- o Many high schools have refused recruiters any formal assistance in approaching their students. Mailing lists cannot be obtained, and entry to the school usually is forbidden except on so-called "career days" once or twice annually when any number of competing interests are allowed to set up booths to disseminate information to prospective graduates. Most guidance counselors accept literature on enlistment opportunities to be placed on their office bookshelves along with a thousand other pieces of literature, but recruiters find themselves starting "from ground zero" when seeking active involvement from many counselors.
- o Lake Braddock High School in Northern Virginia's Fairfax County enrolls approximately 4,000 high school students annually and enjoys a good reputation for sending its seniors on to institutions of higher learning. The majority of its students' parents are government servants, and a goodly number of those are active duty military. It should be fertile ground for the recruiter. So organized is the school that it regularly publishes and mails to parents the "Career Center Newsletter" along with the school's monthly newspaper. The single-page January 1981 newsletter contained a reprint from the December 1980 issue of Career World, a publication designed for guidance counselors. It lists the so-called "cloudiest jobs for the 80s" as shown in Table 1, including "military officer" among six selected careers.

If the outlook is thought to be cloudiest for a career as a military officer in the 1980s, what must the average high school student hear from his guidance counselor as regards joining as an enlisted member?

TABLE 1

CLOUDIEST JOBS FOR THE 80s

	<u>Estimated Growth</u>	<u>Starting Salary</u>	<u>Mid-Career Salary</u>	<u>Why Prospect is Poor</u>
Teacher	20%	\$11,000	\$17,000	Budget cuts and declining enrollment
Military officer	17%	\$10,000	\$22,000	Poor pay scale
Newspaper reporter	20%	\$12,500	\$25,000	Too many want to write
Public relations manager	24%	\$12,000	\$32,000	When economy sour, these go first
Lawyer	25%	\$18,000	\$50,000	Oversupply
Architect	43%	\$12,000	\$28,700	Ground level jobs scarce

SOURCE: Career World, December 1980.

Some enterprising recruiters have approached various of the unemployment offices in their districts to try to obtain the support of officials in sending job-seekers their way, but without notable success. An inquiry to one recruiting command headquarters in 1981 revealed that the Labor Department had for years been very cool to suggestions that space be allocated within unemployment offices for recruiters to periodically set up shop.

As can be seen from the brief treatment in this chapter, the services had to travel a long and arduous road, learning from their mistakes, until they achieved some level of competency in the use of national

advertising to promote recruiting. Perhaps some of the learning to use the advertising medium could have preceded the AVF era had there been greater coordination between those who advised President Nixon to abolish the draft, supporting members of his immediate staff, and those in the Defense Department hierarchy. As it was, individual service recruiting commands were formed and re-formed on relatively short notice, given their missions and tasks, then left to find appropriately talented personnel in a random search through the ranks.

Chapter 2 Endnotes

1. Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force, by Thomas S. Gates, Chairman (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1970).

3. WHAT IS THE PUBLIC RELATIONS TASK?

Public Relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management to keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communications techniques as its principal tools.

Dr. Rex F. Harlow
Public Relations Expert
19761

That the AVF experience thus far has been successful is a generally accepted view. Certainly it can be said there is no ground swell of public opinion tending toward a return to the draft, and the Reagan administration is on record as opposing peacetime conscription. From that standpoint, then, there is little for public relations experts to forecast using their early warning system which might suggest the public wants something different.

The Gates Commission predicated its arguments for an AVF based upon a projected and sustained active force level of between 2.3 and 2.5 million. Instead, we find recruiters occasionally falling short of their goal of maintaining truly qualified enlistments to meet a force level

which today is just over two million personnel. Seen in this way, the success of the AVF experience is at best a relative judgment, one with which some would violently disagree.

The Public Relations Problem

A significant part of the recruiting problem is not enlistments at all, but attrition. Although the loss phenomenon which the CNO called a "hemorrhage of talent" has abated somewhat, probably because of a combination of over 8 percent private sector unemployment and 1980 raises in military pay and benefits, military analysts generally agree that it is a temporary lull. Once the economy rights itself, so this argument goes, most Americans will again perceive the disadvantages of military life to outweigh the disadvantages of a civilian occupation. -

Meanwhile, even with a marginally improved retention picture, the services still are losing approximately four out of every ten enlistees at or before the end of their first tour according to latest Defense Department figures. One can infer from this statistic that the individual who has enlisted, for whatever reasons, and they may not always be cogent ones, confronts a military environment which does not usually entice him to remain on active duty. The overarching first question for public affairs specialists then, if public relations is to

be a useful management tool, is what can we do to bring greater public understanding and support of the military more in line with the truth of its actual life style?

One is reminded of the Chief of Information of the Navy Department in 1981, who, in a letter to his small cadre of career public affairs officers, declared his motto^A and that of the entire community, ought to be "the truth well told." In fact, the Navy public affairs community since its inception has carried the motto "Nothing but the truth."

The first task from a public affairs management point of view is to define the objectives. Briefly stated, they are: To communicate to external and internal publics of the American military the advantages of a career in the military; to correct misperceptions which may exist both within and without the military about what a military career entails; and to encourage senior civilian and military managers to seek ways to improve or remove elements of military life which reduce its quality in the minds of those who serve.

As seen from the public affairs perspective, there is no tangible difference between the communications challenge of promoting either enlistments or retention--what works for one should also work for the other.

A sound public relations plan immediately must address an often overlooked aspect of communications in the recruitment and retention picture. That is, each time a soldier, sailor, marine, or airman leaves the service prematurely because of a perceived grievance or dissatisfaction, he or she returns home and becomes a very credible communicator among contemporaries with no comparable military experience. If the "expert's" experiences were unhappy ones, there is little question that the uninformed will form opinions about the value of military service which no amount of impersonal advertising, nor a recruiter who is spread too thinly among the local population, can easily erase. Remembering that 40 percent of first-term enlistees leave the military at or before the end of their enlistment, one is immediately confronted with the magnitude of negative communications about the military likely being conveyed to the would-be recruit segment of the population. Where the views of the individual who returns from an unrewarding military experience are in disagreement with recruiting advertising information, the face-to-face communications usually are considered more credible. This phenomenon, well-known among professional communicators, also has a residual negative effect upon the credibility an individual attaches to future nonpersonal communication of similar information.

Therefore, the first priority of an effective public affairs program is to work to improve the retention of qualified military personnel in

order to remove from the marketplace as much as possible the disenchanted communicator who left the service and now is contradicting millions of dollars of Defense Department advertising.

Public affairs activity in behalf of recruiting and retention programs must also be sensitive to the sociocultural patterns which affect the way individuals gather and use information. Summaries of these patterns, as characterized in much of the professional public relations literature, particularly that of Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, follow:

Exurbanization. America continues to experience problems of urban decay, "white flight" from inner cities, population and industrial migration to Sun Belt states, and an attendant dispersion of the prime recruit audience to exurbia and smaller towns. These demographic trends, if they persist through the 1980s, will require periodic adjustments to the location of recruiting offices, more travel by recruiters to ever-smaller concentrations of prospective recruits, and more intelligent use of mass media communications in all forms, especially radio and television, to reach numerous smaller clusters of listeners and viewers. Combined with a birth rate which promises to shrink the number of youths available to the recruiters, these conditions present a serious challenge to recruiting advertising and public affairs practitioners alike.

Scientific explosion. It has been said that the revolution of rising expectations in America and elsewhere rides on the revolution of technology. US Government investment in research has multiplied 200 times since 1940, and some argue that half the world's scientists are engaged in military research, development, and production. Defense analyst Herman Kahn thinks military technology has replaced the mode of production of industrialized society as the prime determinant of its social structure. Similarly, the pressure is on the military as a major employer to find increasingly talented technicians in a shrinking pool of America's youth. Sophisticated weaponry, complex organizations, and competition from other major employers all combine to aggravate enlistment and retention problems for the military in the 1980s and beyond.

Segregation and automation of work. This phenomenon grows out of the complexity of high technology and industrial production, the requirement for specialized manpower, and the increasingly important organization of the work of specialists in an incorporated structure to bring about a finished product. It separates the individual worker from clear association with the finished product, making any identification with the corporate entity or "loyalty to the firm" more difficult. In the military it contributes to the work condition which manpower analyst Charles Moskos has termed an "occupational model" and tends to denigrate leadership to only a management function, sometimes ignoring the formation of esprit de

corps. Fundamentally, each individual sees himself as having a marketable skill which he will sell to the highest bidder, rather than as a careerist motivated by some higher purpose such as patriotism or loyalty. Current recruiting advertising contributes to this condition each time it delivers the message that the military promises to teach a skill which has civilian transferability.

Education explosion. As more and more Americans complete programs of higher education beyond high school, seen as their inalienable right, the demands upon large organizations to attend to the needs of each individual and his "self-image" grow exponentially. It may be said that America is tending toward one great "middle class" society. Paralleling this tendency, the better-educated person will have more self-respect, will want to be treated more as an individual, will be far less tolerant of authoritarianism and organizational and societal restraints, and will have different and higher expectations of what he wants to put into a job and what he wants to get out of it.¹ In fact, Andrew Hacker in his book The End of the American Era, has argued that education "undermines the preconditions for patriotism and piety."² Longitudinal studies of youth attitudes have shown that their perception of the military as a place of employment is that it is arbitrary, unresponsive to individual ideas, and somewhat unjust in the treatment of its employees. Therefore, as John D. Blair points out in his paper "Emerging Youth Attitudes and the Military," we may have an explanation for why the military is

generally viewed as the least favorable in a group of organizational work settings to be pursued after high school.³

Information explosion. Concomitant with America's highly educated technocracy, the growth in instantaneous communications, best characterized by the nightly network television news programs telling us of moments-old events from all over the country, have permitted each of us to have opinions on a varied range of topics. We practice "instant expertise" drawing upon Cronkite, the New York Times, and Time magazine, not only to be the best-informed citizens in the world, but also the most activist, using the power of our opinion in action-oriented ways. Popular "causes" come and go quickly, leaving behind special interest groups which mold and shape public opinion, leading to the election or defeat of congressmen, their legislation, and presidents. The paradox of our existence today may well be that we can communicate farther and faster than ever before, but so much is being transmitted and the messages are so much more complex, that the receiver--the individual--is battered into insensitivity. Into this maelstrom we attempt to inject useful information about military employment opportunities, hoping to capture the attention of an adolescent and his parents already bombarded with messages. To sort out and prioritize the surfeit of messages, and to personalize their meaning are the purposes of public relations. The operative activity is "to relate."

The Power of Public Opinion

The actual process of public relations, to be developed in the remainder of this chapter, draws heavily upon the teachings of Scott M. Cutlip and his joint work with Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations. In their chapter dealing with persuasion and public opinion, they note the power of public opinion and the commensurate growth of efforts to influence it, principally through the use of public relations and advertising.

Put simply, there are four ways of influencing people to do what you want them to do--purchase, patronage, pressure, or persuasion. In the early days of America those who wanted a commission in the military purchased it. Today, one seeking appointment to a military academy seeks the patronage of a legislator as one way to gain entry. The threat of criminal prosecution for failure to register with the draft board provided the pressure during conscription. And today we mount a nationwide advertising campaign, backed by hundreds of regional field representatives, in order to persuade a sufficient number of qualified individuals to enlist.

We apply the process of persuasion to selected "publics." It is a common mistake, Cutlip and other practitioners warn us, to think of "the public" as "one massive, monolithic assemblage." The vast body of Ameri-

can citizenry is not waiting upon our every message, however persuasive it may be, before forming what we commonly call public opinion. There are, rather, many publics, disparate special interest groups, separate ideologies, dissimilar classes, and even diverse cultures within the country which complicate planning a nationwide public relations campaign.

Corresponding to innumerable publics, countless categories of individuals are grouped together by virtue of their common interests. In the Navy, for example, we talk of developing, through public relations, an influential "maritime constituency," a group of concerned citizens working together as a body to improve America's strength as a world sea-power. Such a constituency grows out of what is known within theories of mass communication as a "group consensus process" in which each person is rewarded for conforming to the standards of the group, is punished for deviating from them, and whose opinion and attitude are strongly influenced by the group. The Navy League of the United States represents just such a group. Public relations practitioners must assume the role of detectives to find the groups whose abiding self-interest orients them toward the opinions, attitudes, and actions which any particular campaign hopes to persuade them to espouse.

Some observations about the nature of public opinion, developed over a decade of study by the public relations community, give insight to its predictability:

- o Important events of unusual magnitude are likely to swing public opinion temporarily from one extreme to another. For example, those otherwise opposed to gun control legislation may briefly favor it after an attempted assassination of the President. Such dramatic events generally shape opinion more than spoken words, but verbal statements and outlines of courses of action by prominent officials have maximum importance when opinion is indeterminate, that is, when individuals seek interpretation from a reliable source. Too, public opinion does not anticipate emergencies, but reacts to them. After an assassination attempt, those with no strong opinion about gun control legislation often begin to favor it. However, opinion is basically determined by self-interest and does not remain aroused for a long period unless people feel their self-interest is acutely involved or events sustain it. Once self-interest is involved, opinions are not easily changed and, in a democracy, opinion supported by self-interest usually is ahead of the formulation of official policy.
- o An accomplished fact tends to shift public opinion in the direction of acceptance when the opinion is held only by a slight majority, or when opinion is not solidly structured.
- o At critical times, people become more sensitive to the adequacy of their leadership: If they have confidence in it, they are willing to assign more than usual responsibility to it; if they lack confidence in it, they are less tolerant than usual. People are less reluctant to leave critical decisions to their leaders if they feel that they, the people, are taking part in the decision.
- o People have more opinions, and are able to form opinions more easily, about goals than how to reach those goals. Thus, if a young man or woman is contemplating enlistment in the military, the tendency will be to form opinions readily from information from a number of sources as to what service to join but not how to do it. Too, public opinion, like individual opinion, is colored by desire. And when opinion is based chiefly on desire rather than on information, it is likely to show especially sharp shifts with events. A would-be recruit's desire to join the Navy might be changed by the high school friend who returns from his enlistment with horror stories about shipboard duty. On the other hand, if people in a democracy are provided educational opportunities and ready access to information, public opinion reveals a hard-headed common sense. The more enlightened to the implications of events and proposals for their own self-interest, the more likely people are to agree with the more objective opinions of realistic experts.⁴

Suggestions for a Different Approach

In the opinion of this author, persuasion is the most useful public relations technique in recruiting and retention programs both now and in the foreseeable future. Some of the characteristics of persuasion include the following:

- o Acceptance of the message by the target audience is a critical factor in persuasive communications. Acceptance is dependent upon the message's utility to the recipient's own needs and desires, its harmony in relationship to group norms and loyalties, and the perceived trustworthiness of the message giver. And as noted earlier in the discussion of those who communicate negative opinions about the military when they return home, face-to-face communications (interpersonal) will reinforce a message delivered by mass media when they are in agreement, thereby giving greater strength than if only one of the sources were communicating.
- o The change in attitude we seek through mass media advertising is more likely to occur if the message is accompanied by other factors, such as a changing environment, which underlie deeply seated beliefs and attitudes.
- o Opinion will temporarily change more in the desired direction if the message's conclusions are explicit, not implicit, and if only one side of the argument is presented when the audience is neutral or friendly. When the audience is hostile, and may hear the other side of the argument, it is better to present opposing viewpoints in your message, thus to appear objective in its presentation. On the other hand, the last message transmitted and received, when it has equal merit compared to earlier messages, will usually be the one remembered. The foregoing is the fundamental premise behind the activity of most government spokespersons. Each of them wants to transmit his agency's point of view, whenever possible, without credible contradiction from any other source. If there is any contradictory communication, then he seeks to respond to it after its transmission just before the reporters have to file their stories in order to be the last credible source heard from.

- o Emotional, factual, and low-threat messages are dependent upon the urgency of the situation to be effective. Low-threat appeals to action in a given situation ordinarily are more effective in sponsoring attitude change or overt action than high-threat messages which demand something. In fact, a desired opinion change takes time, seldom being measurable just after exposure to the message. The delay accommodates the recipient's need to assimilate and deliberate upon the content of the communication. However, those whose opinion you most want to change--those opposed to your message--are not listening. Their minds are made up and reject contradictory information, censoring what does not agree with their point of view.⁵

The four principles of persuasion, derived from research in the social sciences, are as follows:

1. IDENTIFICATION PRINCIPLE. Most people will ignore an idea, opinion, or point of view unless they see clearly that it affects their personal fears or desires, hopes, or aspirations. THE MESSAGE MUST BE STATED IN TERMS OF THE INTEREST OF THE TARGET AUDIENCE.

2. ACTION PRINCIPLE. People seldom buy ideas separated from action--either action taken or about to be taken by the sponsor of the idea, or action that the people themselves can conveniently take to prove the merit of the idea. UNLESS A MEANS OF ACTION IS PROVIDED, PEOPLE TEND TO SHRUG OFF APPEALS TO DO THINGS.

3. FAMILIARITY AND TRUST PRINCIPLE. We buy ideas from those we trust; we are influenced by or adopt only those opinions or points of view put forward by individuals or corporations or institutions that we

regard as credible. UNLESS THE LISTENER HAS CONFIDENCE IN THE SPEAKER, HE IS NOT LIKELY TO LISTEN OR BELIEVE.

4. CLARITY PRINCIPLE. The situation must be clear to us, not confusing. The thing we observe, read, see, or hear, the thing that produces our impressions, must be clear, not subject to several interpretations. People tend to see things as black or white. TO COMMUNICATE, YOU MUST EMPLOY WORDS, SYMBOLS, OR STEREOTYPES THAT THE RECEIVER COMPREHENDS AND RESPONDS TO.⁶

Beyond these four principles is an absolute requirement to be consistent and coherent when actually communicating the information to the chosen publics. It does far more harm to develop an advertising program to communicate with prospective recruits and their influencers which operates independently of an overall public relations program for the entire military department, than if no programs were conducted at all. Forgetting the obvious pitfalls of duplication and inefficient use of resources, a tendency to violate the clarity principle occurs almost immediately because too many similar but uncorrelated information campaigns are competing for an already overburdened attention span. Add the uncontrollable information being spewed forth by the news media, as in the case of the "war in our living rooms" eyewitness reports from Vietnam, and the periodic and increasingly more frequent documentaries and newspaper series analyzing the state of our military readiness seen

in the past two years, and violations of the four principles are obvious. Worst of all is the distinct possibility that the listeners and viewers will grow tired and bored with the surfeit of messages--the communication will lose its impact--and ignore any further attempts to communicate with them.

Two short examples will illustrate. The first is the case of the soon-to-graduate high school senior and his parents who receive successive letters from all four services on the advantages of enlistment in the military. If he responds, asking for more information, he begins to receive phone calls from the local recruiter and mailed information from one service. Meanwhile, other services begin to send out follow-up letters. At the same time, the high school schedules a career day in the gymnasium while the student is confronted by still more recruiters, all seeking his attention. In the same short period, the guidance counselor has developed an information packet for graduating seniors which includes information asserting that a career as a military officer is among those "cloudiest" for the 1980s because of low pay. Add to this mix all the service recruiting advertising on radio, television, magazines, and on outdoor posters along the streets. Contrast it with the eyewitness account of his buddy's experiences, for example, the ex-enlistee who just returned from an 11-month cruise to the Indian Ocean, going ashore only twice, who now believes that the story that the Navy is "not just a job . . . it's an adventure," is a lot of crap.

The second, less specific, example is that which the Defense Department confronted in the first half of the Carter administration. At that time, each of the services was conducting its own full-blown public affairs campaign warning of the steady growth of the Soviet military capability. However, at the same time, information was finding its way into the news media from Presidential Review Memorandum 10, SEAPLAN 2000, POMCUS, and several other "defense" studies which all seemed to contradict the thrust of the services' information programs. The result was confusion, followed by suspicion on the part of the media that they were being manipulated, followed by a backlash effect in the media and among the public that accused the military of "crying wolf" in order to increase its share of the federal budget.

The organized practice of public relations should follow a four-step process in order to achieve its ultimate objective, as Cutlip and other experts assert, to promote a harmonious relationship between an institution and its publics. Certainly, this is a worthy objective for any government agency, including Defense and the military departments. The public relations professional, in his government role as public affairs officer, must promote the exchange of opinions and information between his leadership and the public. To do so, he must be a listener, a communicator, a counselor, and an evaluator, involved continuously in a problem-solving process consisting of the following four basic steps:

1. **RESEARCH-LISTENING.** The probing of opinions, attitudes, and reactions of those concerned with the acts and policies of the military, followed by the evaluation of the inflow. In other words, "What's our problem?"
2. **PLANNING-DECISIONMAKING.** Bringing the attitudes, opinions, ideas, and reactions to bear on the policies and programs of the military and civilian leadership to enable them to chart a course in the interests of all concerned. Or, "Here's what we can do."
3. **COMMUNICATION-ACTION.** Explaining and dramatizing the chosen course to all those who may be affected and whose support is essential. "Here's what we did and why."
4. **EVALUATION.** Measuring the results of the program and the effectiveness of techniques used in order to make continuous improvements to a never-ending process. "How did we do?"⁷

Admittedly this process is difficult to institute in the midst of an ongoing public affairs program. Nonetheless, the corporation or government agency which has remodeled its efforts to parallel these actions, whatever they are labeled, soon should see tangible rewards. Most obvious perhaps, an orderly and logical planning process can be impressed upon a public affairs office otherwise held hostage by the imminent deadlines of the mass media or the random but incessant demands of the public seeking information, one bit at a time. Moreover, senior decisionmakers, ordinarily outraged by a story in the mass media which attacks their organization, can be influenced toward a more understanding reaction to bad press when seen from the perspective of the gradual, step-by-step process to mold favorable public opinion.

Ultimately, the foregoing lists of the observed elements of the public relations process are only guidelines, not commandments to insure success. The best of programs will fail due to unforeseen events or unenlightened decisionmakers. The public affairs effort will, however, improve the odds that a policy announcement will find public favor and support, because it seeks constantly to involve the public in the planning process. Government employees, as servants of the public, would do well to remember how essential the public's active participation in the process really is.

Chapter 3 Endnotes

1. Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations, 5th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978).
2. Andrew Hacker, The End of the American Era (New York: Atheneum, 1970).
3. John D. Blair, "Emerging Youth Attitudes in the Military," in The Changing World of the American Military, ed. Franklin D. Margiotta (Colorado: Westview, 1978).
4. Hadley Cantril. Gauging Public Opinion (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1947), pp. 220-230.
5. These are condensed from a number of sources in Cutlip and Center, p. 134.
6. Ibid., pp. 134-135.
7. Ibid., p. 139.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE 1980s

Public opinion about the draft has gradually shifted during the past three years, particularly among men of draft age. Professor John D. Blair of the University of Maryland reports:

A 1973 national sample of civilians supported the all-volunteer approach rather than the draft by nearly a two-to-one margin.

At the end of the decade of the seventies there has been a substantial change in public opinion from that which existed as the all-volunteer conversion was taking place . . . the public was split with 45 percent supporting the switch to volunteers and 43 percent thinking it would have been better to have kept the draft. In addition, in 1979 another national sample reported that only 8 percent thought the volunteer recruitment system for the armed forces was working well, with 36 percent indicating it was working pretty well, but with 44 percent stating it was working not well at all.

Commensurate with this increasing unease with the all-volunteer force is growing support for registration of the names of all young men so they could be called up in an emergency. In March of 1979 a Gallup poll found that 82 percent of the public favored registration with 18 percent opposed. Interestingly, among young adults 18-24 the results were not much different . . . Support for a return to the draft has gone from 40 percent in 1977 to 49 percent in 1979 to 59 percent in February of 1980.¹

It is at least conceivable that the shift is less a distinct trend than a swing of the pendulum back to a normal American cultural ethic--peace through strength--which had been skewed by Vietnam. Also, other events, notably including the overthrow of the Shah in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, as well as continuing public debate

concerning registration, combat readiness, and military pay, have spurred public concern about our strength and international image. This concern likely found an outlet through surveys on related subjects such as the draft. Therefore, it would be premature to conclude that the trends suggest the public would support a political decision to return to a peacetime draft unless military conflict were imminent.

Those who advocate an immediate return to the draft also face other opposition. A thousand or more University of Chicago undergraduates, attending a 1981 lecture by Naval War College professor Robert Woods on military history and current events, exhibited an unmistakable air of militancy and frustration over what they perceived to be America's increasing international impotency. The professor asked them if, therefore, they would favor an immediate return to the draft. Not one hand was raised in favor of the idea. His conclusion: There is among college youth "a strong rhetorical militancy unbacked by any sense of personal commitment." It may be only a little harsh to say that college youth expect someone else to do the fighting. In any event, surveys support the view that, unless the country is under immediate military threat, few would join the military.

In the final analysis, the decision to abolish the draft grew out of unanimous political campaign forecasts of public opinion that the candidate promising to get us out of Vietnam honorably, reduce our

international commitments, and remove the draft's upheaval of young lives would win the election. Its correctness as a political judgment is inferred by some from the Nixon victory. The quality of the decision as national security policymaking is questionable, and some are convinced that it undermines participatory patriotism in America not to have a draft. In any event, very little informed public debate accompanied the political decision to abolish the draft, most analysts instead reacting to the demonstrations of the vociferous minority. The rhetorical question that plagues the historian is whether President Nixon's leadership in another direction would have met with outraged public resistance had he decided to scrap the idea of volunteerism before it began and after the withdrawal from Vietnam was well underway. Possibly, had the administration verbalized a sound national security strategy, conveyed through explicitly defined pro-con arguments while Nixon's political stock was at its highest, and which incorporated continuation of the draft, the otherwise silent majority might have agreed that conscription still had social merit.

Although the political decision probably was correct, the executive branch failed to initiate a broad spectrum public affairs campaign to seek informed support across America. The sociocultural impact of draft abolition took it out of the Pentagon's sole purview and should have dictated that other federal agencies, and hopefully congressional supporters as well, lend their voices to an information program to tell

the public that its sons and daughters had a patriotic duty--not only an employment opportunity--to consider. Instead, money was thrown at the recruiting commands to buy advertising and promotion, and a good deal of disorganized activity ensued without much outward support from federal officialdom. The congressional mood fluctuated, too, first hopeful, then questioning, then suspicious, and put recruiting advertising and military public affairs budgets on an uncertain rollercoaster ride of ups and downs.

Elected officials, having decided on an all-volunteer force concept of manning the nation's military, should have taken responsibility to use their visibility and credibility to help develop a public opinion consensus. Rather, they remained silent on the subject, assuming perhaps, as the Gates Commission had, that the AVF was an idea whose time had come. Even in the Defense Department until 1979, the primary focus for major public speeches was not the AVF, but increased procurement, more hardware, and the growing Soviet threat. Former Defense Secretary Harold Brown, appearing on Public Broadcasting's "MacNeil-Lehrer Report" 15 January 1981 as he concluded his term of office, said his single greatest failure in office was not recognizing sooner the need to raise military pay and benefits to assist AVF and retention efforts of the services. By that time, the 1980 pay-raise was a reality, but it had taken two years and the combined efforts of the Joint Chiefs, countless televised appearances by underpaid military families on food stamps, and

hundreds of newspaper and magazine stories to gain public attention and spur the ~~A~~administration into action.

A National Public Communications Campaign

Future administrations will do well to remember that major changes in public policy always require broad public support to be effective. These changes cannot be left to the responsibility of the bureaucracy. The vocal individual commitment of each of the nation's elected leaders, plus the spearhead of a continuing nationwide public communications campaign using all government agencies affected by the policy change, are necessary to win public attention, understanding, and active support.

The Reagan administration recognizes the merit of such planning as it moves to increase Defense expenditures. The Washington Post reported in a 5 March 1981 front page story:

In hopes of capitalizing on what Reagan administration leaders sense is a favorable climate toward higher defense spending even as social programs are reduced, Pentagon civilian leaders will soon launch a public relations offensive. Weinberger and the civilian service Secretaries will be the point men in the offensive that is to feature television appearances and speeches detailing a growing Soviet threat.

The support and understanding of the Congress essential to undertaking a major change in policy also was evident in the same article:

John G. Tower (R-Tex.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, indicated yesterday that he wants the Pentagon's major budgets approved by Congress before there is any backlash about cuts in domestic programs. Urging Weinberger to finish several reports Congress has requested as quickly as possible, Tower said: "My rationale for a full-court press will be more apparent later."

It should be evident, even to the casual observer of the history of the AVF, that such a public relations program never happened. However, advocacy of the all-volunteer military easily could be made a part of the "offensive" now being planned, and as Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger pledged with regard to proposed pay raises in 1981, "Our military personnel will become first-class citizens once again."

In much the same manner, the offensive could also be joined by defense-related industrial leadership in the private sector. As a part of the consortium, those citizens whose business success depends upon military spending could be enlisted to serve in planning and advisory committees to assist the military in its recruitment and retention planning and execution. Speakers' bureaus could be formed in major corporations to assist in a nationwide speech program communicating the advantages of military service before entering the civilian workplace. Such a program could be reinforced and given credibility with a cooperative training program in which more military enlisted personnel would enjoy programs such as those currently available for a few officers and known as "a year with industry." The prospects for

cross-fertilization of views between the civilian work force and military counterparts, as well as the enhancement of civil-military relations at the grass~~x~~roots level, are most attractive in such a proposal. Too, the opportunity for military and civilian personnel to compare the life quality of military service with that of the civilian workplace would be valuable, providing that we maintain comparability in the military service experience. Such a program could be a reenlistment incentive to our best performers whose sense of pride and professionalism might be communicated in a highly credible, face-to-face setting with their civilian counterparts and through them hopefully to the next generation.

NBC "Nightly News," 1 March 1981, reported what it called a recruiting advertising "media blitz" in Tampa, Florida, to attract those interested in naval aviation. The television and radio advertisements advised the audience to telephone for more information, at which time the caller was screened for eligibility. Later at a rented airfield the would-be pilots were brought together with a group of highly motivated naval aviators and a large display of the latest fighter aircraft. Over 50 percent of the respondents ultimately enlisted, according to Navy spokespersons. This is a good example of the effective use of advertising and promotion, albeit at high cost per enlistee. More is being done in this vein by all the services to tie together a media advertising appeal with an actual event that stimulates face-to-face communication with experts and promotes an immediate action--enlistment--by the inter-

ested respondents. The appeal to "call your local recruiter today" simply is not directive enough to spur action even when a favorable attitude toward the military exists. Youth surveys indicate that the military as a social institution in America already enjoys favorable attitudes among the highest in categories such as freedom from corruption, societal influence, and federal budget share. The same surveys demonstrate, however, that the military is the least attractive place to work, as shown in Table 2.

As these data clearly indicate, a good deal more communication about the high quality of the military as a work experience must be delivered to and accepted by the nation's youth, and be credible when compared with their perceptions of other work experiences, if we hope to attract a sufficient number of qualified volunteers from the shrinking manpower pool in the decade of the 1980s. Moreover, if the military work experience does not favorably compare with the private sector, and obviously youth think not, more must be done to make the military life style attractive. Doing so will improve retention, which will reduce the need for volunteers.

TABLE 2
PERCENT RATING EACH SETTING AS ACCEPTABLE
OR DESIRABLE PLACE TO WORK

	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%
Small business - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/74.4
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/75.4
Self-employed - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/80.0
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/56.9
Partnership - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/70.3
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/63.0
Corporation - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/62.1
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/59.2
Government - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/58.2
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/61.0
Social service - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/37.0
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/70.6
University - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/43.7
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/61.0
Police - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/45.0
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/50.5
Military - Males	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/32.5
- Females	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/30.4
Average setting rating	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-/57.3

SOURCE: John D. Blair, "Public Opinion and the Military," in The Eagle's Brood: Civil-Military Relations in the 1980s, ed. Ned Sabrosky and Judith A. Sabrosky (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, forthcoming).

Assuredly, low pay is part of the problem, but youth also discriminate against the military for other reasons, real or imagined. For example, American youth rate the military only 2.75 on a scale of 5 as offering a real opportunity to have their ideas heard--that the military is too arbitrary to allow individuals to influence or shape it as an organization. Yet, as an organization, the military is in need of only moderate changes or reforms in their estimation, on balance a reasonably favorable impression when compared to other US organizations and institutions. On the other hand, and perhaps most disturbing for recruiting considerations, the majority of youth responded to the surveys that they probably would not volunteer to fight in a war even if it were defined as necessary. Of this response, John Blair says in his article:

. . . young people have not generally rejected war and sacrifices, but they appear more cautious in supporting the use of military force and more selective in the price that they are willing to pay. They perceive that the military offers considerable job opportunities, especially in terms of further education and promotion with little racial or sexual discrimination. But they also believe that the military is arbitrary, unresponsive to individual ideas, and somewhat unjust in the treatment of its employees.²

The military needs to make greater changes in the way in which it values its enlisted personnel. Any sense of patronization of them or failure to foster two-way communications both down and up the chain of command will tend to confirm the perceptions youth already hold. This

clearly is a challenge to leadership at the unit level, and the challenge must be answered by career non~~x~~commissioned officers in positions of supervision and to a lesser extent by junior officers.

One can verify the accuracy of the perceptions of youth, and by implication see how those who leave the service can convey their experiences to non~~x~~military contemporaries, by examining the results of enlisted separation questionnaires. The Navy's cumulative results from 8,715 enlisted respondents during fiscal year 1980 read as follows (in order of priority):

1. Pay is too low
2. Dislike family separations
3. Too many petty regulations
4. Not being treated with respect
5. Lack of recognition for doing a good job
6. Too much unfair treatment
7. I want to live someplace permanently
8. Senior officers don't care about enlisted people
9. Dislike sea duty
10. Poor berthing areas afloat³

As can be seen, five of the ten most-given reasons for leaving the Navy have to do with the manner in which enlisted persons perceive they are

being treated. The Navy's retention task force reports that junior officers give the same reasons for separating from the Navy and in about the same priority.

Put simply, we must pay even more attention to personnel once they have enlisted and begun their careers than we tend to pay in order to get them to enlist.

One can generally confirm the value of this approach by evaluating the results of surveys of those who have expressed an intention to reenlist. The Navy's Occupational Task Analysis Program prioritized cumulative results of so-called satisfiers listed by 10,293 respondents to a fiscal year 1980 questionnaire, as follows:

1. Overall military career
2. Working relationships with supervisors
3. Working relationships with co-workers/peers
4. Opportunity to do worthwhile work
5. challenge
6. Work surroundings (safety)
7. Opportunity for advancement
8. Overall job
9. Competence of supervisors
10. Competence of co-workers/peers⁴

Thus these respondents intended to reenlist for reasons which tend to contradict some of the perceptions of youth about the quality of the military as a workplace. We must convey such perceptions to the public by every means to counteract misinformation already in the marketplace. We have surmised that much of the misinformation is conveyed by word-of-mouth from dissatisfied individuals who separate from the services during the first enlistment. By contrast, those who are satisfied reenlist, do not visit their home of record frequently, and probably do not see and talk with as many of their civilian contemporaries. These individuals should be given every opportunity to serve as spokespersons for the military way of life and ambassadors of goodwill.

First-term top performers might be invited to volunteer for an all-expense-paid trip with family back home. While there, the volunteer would be expected to complete a schedule of visits to former schools and haunts where contemporaries congregate. The local recruiter would serve as the advance man for such goodwill visits, seeking the active cooperation of Reserve military units and such groups as Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Navy League of the United States, Air Force Association, Army Association, and other patriotically-oriented special interest groups. The funding for such activities should be drawn from existing advertising budgets and follow-on local advertising should use film footage taken during the visit to the community. Obviously,

such a program would have maximum impact in smaller communities, but larger events with a similar focus could be developed for the boroughs and suburbs of larger cities as well.

The Implementation of Solutions

In truth, many excellent techniques of mass communications and persuasion are now being employed by recruiting commands. These techniques are helping to shape public opinion and attitudes in a more positive manner, sequentially using multiple forms of communication to move the target audience to action. Existing public relations and advertising programs have done well in creating or reinforcing favorable impressions of the American military in terms of its legitimacy and its performance as a major institution in society. However, more can be done to focus positive feelings about the military which already prevail in the private sector to influence those who are undecided about their future as they consider the years following high school, or even if they recently have begun college but are unhappy there. At the same time we must continue to improve the flexibility and responsiveness of the military to the human condition of its membership wherever possible. The new retention-motivating programs are successful in motivating enlistment when communicated properly to the public. They should help reverse impressions that the military is an arbitrary workplace where individual

ideas stand no chance to be heard. Among programs recently introduced are the following:

- o Reviving the regimental concept in the Army
- o Homesteading in the Navy to reduce family moves and separations
- o Expanded upward mobility programs
- o Better use of internal two-way communications

Public opinion in the 1980s will continually challenge military budgets and actions. Answers to the challenges must come from the entire chain of command, but especially civilian leaders, if we are to maintain public confidence, support for the military, and sufficient numbers of enlistments. Responsible and expanded public affairs activity, coordinated at the highest levels of government, can make a decidedly positive contribution to recruiting and retention in the future by explaining that the military, and a period of enlistment for most concerned citizens, is not only a price we pay for living in today's world, but an honorable and patriotic commitment to the future, which deserves the respect of the citizenry.

There will always be critics who believe that coordinated and costly public affairs programs corrupt the ineluctable formation of public opinion, producing only short-term swings of mood toward one extreme or

another which do not accurately represent our collective desires for the future of the country. For them the activity of policymaking forever remains a catch-up game unable to anticipate what the public will support. They refuse to understand that public relations, like politics, is the art of the possible which seeks some understanding of collective human behavior.

Chapter 4 Endnotes

1. John D. Blair, "Public Opinion and the Military," in The Eagle's Brood: Civil-Military Relations in the 1980s, ed. Ned Sabrosky and Judith A. Sabrosky (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, forthcoming).

2. Ibid.

3. Unpublished report of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Career Programs Branch (OP-134), Navy Department, Washington, D.C., February 1981.

4. Ibid.

GLOSSARY

AVF	all-volunteer force
BAR	Broadcast Advertisers Report, Inc.
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
FY	fiscal year
GAO	Government Accounting Office
HASC	House Armed Services Committee
JAMRP	Joint Advertising and Market Research Program
PR	public relations
PSA	public service announcement
ROTC	Reserve Officers' Training Corps